Moreton Abbey;

OR THE

FATAL MYSTERY.

A NOVEL,

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By the late

Miſs HARRIET CHILCOT,

of *BATH.*

(AFTERWARDS MRS. MEZIERE.)

Authoreſs of ELMAR and ETHLINDA, a Legendary Tale, &c. &c.

VOLUME the FIRST.

SOUTHAMPTON:
Printed and Sold by T. BAKER, Sold alſo by
J. BEW, Pater-Noſter-Row, LONDON.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE,

TO THE PUBLIC.

THE authenticity of the Novel which is now preſented to the public, is unqueſtionable.—Mrs. MEZIERE, *better known by the name of Miſs* CHILCOT *of* Bath, *who died in the ſummer of the year* 1784, *left* this *and ſome other manuſcripts to the care of her ſiſter.—The Publiſher ſoon afterwards received the original manuſcript of the novel through this channel, of which the Editor has been in poſſeſſion the whole time of his preparing it for the preſs.—It was written during her laſt illneſs, as the intervals of her affliction permit-*

ted, and ſeems to have been perſiſted in almoſt to her laſt moments.

Under ſuch circumſtances, the public may be in doubt whether the hiſtory was completed. —It is the Editor's buſineſs fairly to acknowledge that it was not, upon whom the taſk of completing it devolved, rather than ſuffer the loſs even of a partial manuſcript, the production of a writer whoſe former labours had been favorably received.—He doubts not that the uſual tribute of approbation will be paid to this as to her other genuine labours, and he has to hope that his deficiences will be at leaſt palliated, if not excuſed, on account of his wiſhes to gratify the public expectation.—In what part of the ſecond volume his taſk commenced it is unneceſſary to point out;—the critical reader will but too readily diſcover it,— for whoſe indulgence only he requeſts from his motives in undertaking it.—The imperfections

of

of an unfiniſhed manuſcript alſo are obvious, and the Editor's aſſiſtance in this part has been neceſſarily wanted;—but the reader muſt obſerve that this ſeldom extended farther than the correction of a few grammatical inaccuracies, always to be found in the rough copies of the beſt writers,—and ſome of theſe have been deſignedly omitted, where cuſtom and the common forms of ſpeech ſeem to afford them a ſanction.

This novel may boaſt an advantage over many ſimilar publications, that it is confined to a few characters, each of which has been properly ſupported throughout the whole. ——Many of our novels abound with long epiſodes, which interrupt the principal ſtory, and ſerve no other purpoſe but to increaſe the number of volumes, they commonly tire the reader, and are often unintereſting and frequently impertinent.——In this, the objections here

here ſtated have been obviated;—the ſtory in no part of it, ſtands ſtill, unleſs it may be ſuppoſed to do ſo during Fanny's hiſtory. —But this is the hinge on which the plot of the myſtery turns, and from hence it becomes unavoidable.

The author's abilities, it is preſumed, may be admitted to ſhelter and protect my firſt attempt in this ſpecies of writing, in which I can boaſt of little more than being an humble imitator.

THE EDITOR.

LETTER

LETTER I.

Miſs MORETON *to Miſs* COLVILLE.

Oh! my ſweet Friend, *Moreton Abbey.*

THE powers of expreſſion die under the pen which ſhould delineate them. The ideas croud too complicated upon me;---like the waves of the ocean they ruſh forward, and bury each other. When pleaſure elevates the ſoul,---how

exalted, yet how inexpreſſive are its feelings! The perception of delight,—is of too refined, too delicate a texture for the coarſer organs of expreſſion;—like the ſenſitive plant, it ſhrinks from the rude touch, and refuſes all intimacy with what is ſo diſcordant to its fine and curious fibres. Retreating into the inmoſt receſſes of the ſoul, it ſeats itſelf far beyond the reach of human capacity. It ſeems to defy a connection with mortality, and, in this reſidence, too diſtant to be explored by vulgar beings, lives in feelings never to be deſcribed.

To argue againſt the immortality of the ſoul—how abſurd!—our own feelings convince us that—whether we will or not—we muſt ſubmit to the ſacred truth. To be on ſo many occaſions

tranſported

tranſported into degrees of ſublimity inexpreſſible—ſo far lifted up above the earth—the ſoul rendered ſo independent of the body—the ideas exalted to an height ſo incomprehenſible,--at the ſame time we are ſo ſenſible of, though but imperfectly, and are ſo powerfully actuated thereby;—is—But I will deſcend, my Louiſa-—I will leave theſe high regions of unutterable bliſs, and tread, with my fellow-beings, the low plains of humanity.

But methinks I hear you exclaim, "what can be the meaning of ſuch a "language at this time?——to what "cauſe is all this rapture aſſigned?"—Patience, my Louiſa—excuſe my tranſport.—Ah! my dear friend, HE is RETURN'D,—my BELL is return'd—in

HEALTH he is return'd. How could I worſhip every favoring breeze,—give to each wave that helped to waft him to this long-wiſhed for ſhore, a grateful tear!--I am happy—I feel I am happy;—my heart, my ſoul, my ſpirits are all in perfect uniſon,--they even leave their miſtreſs bankrupt in her wiſhes, and ſhe has no more to aſk.

Every thing around me, my ſweet friend, ſeems ſupremely happy,—I am ſo exceedingly elevated in myſelf, that I can ſcarce credit my exiſtence. I look about—I aſk my heart, if it be the ſame which was once ſo wretched—was but lately ſo diſtracted. Even this thought contributes to my felicity, and ſerves as an addition to my joy; it ſwells higher with delight from the reflection,—and every

every thing wears the aſpect of pleaſure.

Theſe gloomy mouldering towers, which face the window of the room from whence I write this, that formerly inſpired me with thoughts of melancholy and infuſed into my ſoul the ideas of mortality,--now aſſume a look of gaiety. The dark green ivy which curls around the walls, and, like a falſe friend, embraces the column it means to pull to the earth and humble in the duſt,—no more wears that look of ſadneſs, which it was wont to have in my hours of diſcontent and anxiety. That which ſo lately ſerved to remind me of the fate of ſublunary things, and to ſtrike terror to my heart, no longer retains the unpleaſing image,—it almoſt appears a bower of woodbines, and, ſo ſtrong is

the

the power of imagination, I can almoſt fancy that I ſee the flowers.

Pardon, my dear friend, my romantic enthuſiaſm ;—but after ſuch an abſence, —after having ſo often mourned him in the cold manſion of the deep,—ſo often wept him on the blood-dew'd plain,—and now to ſee him in health reſtored.

Oh! my Louiſa, I could weep on my knees for months, in thanks to that Power, who, through ſuch dangers, has brought my warrior ſafe. Heaven, which knows my heart, will accept thoſe thanks my tongue has not the power of offering. But I muſt end at once, or I ſhall be incapable of doing it at all, for the ſubject I am writing upon may

carry

carry me therefrom. On the certainty of your ſetting out the inſtant you receive this for Moreton Abbey,

I remain as ever,

Your's,

MARIA MORETON.

LETTER II.

COLONEL BELLMOUR *to* GEORGE VILLARS, *Eſq.*

Dear George, *Moreton Abbey*

AFTER ſo long an abſence, let theſe few ſyllables ſuffice to tell you that I am returned,——from the horror-breathing plains of death and ſlaughter, where the mangled limbs and bleeding veins of fellow-beings met my every ſtep—I am return'd to love and happineſs—what a change of ſound?—And oh! my friend, how much—how very

very different the ſcene! The mornings here dawn with the ſoft beatings, the tender impulſe of humanity;—they do not awake here to rouſe us to the deſtruction of our race. To ſay the truth, MY heart ſeems formed for the peaceful and domeſtic ſcenes of life. Yet do not think that the utmoſt horrors of war—in the day of battle—in the hour of death—made me one moment regret my ſtation. I have acted,—I think at leaſt, I have acted as I ought—the thanks ſo frequently received from my ſuperior officers, are too convincing proofs of it for this avowal to appear like boaſting;—you know there is no man deteſts it ſo much as my ſelf. Beſides, I think, for the happineſs of his own heart, a man ought to throw vanity and pride far from it;—ſo frequently does it feel the

ſtabs of contempt from good ſenſe, and ſo often is it wounded by the arrows of envy for the few good qualities it may poſſeſs,—that I cannot but conſider it as too treacherous a gueſt ever to be ſuffered to enter that little heaven of happineſs (it might be made) the human breaſt. But whither am I wandering? ——In the groves of happineſs, I am ſeeking the dull, cold, fields of reflection. Villars need but be told I am here to haſten to his expecting

BELLMOUR.

LETTER

LETTER III.

Miſs COLVILLE *to Miſs* MORETON.

My lovely Friend, *Newton Place.*

I AM happy—even with yourſelf.—I am happy at your lov'd Bellmour's long-wiſh'd—long-deſpair'd of arrival.—Thanks to Heaven! now I may hope to ſpend ſome few more gay days with you, exempt from ſhort ſighings and groanings, which uſed to make Moreton Abbey ſeem too much like a Convent of Carmelites—where the poor fooliſh wretches are eternally impoſing

puniſhments on themſelves the good God of this world never meant them to ſuffer. Juſt ſo was it with you.* Such everlaſting weeping and lamenting,—ſuch pitiful and plaintive ejaculations were ever iſſuing forth from that lovely face, as were enough to make one mad. I wonder what in the name of fortune could make me ſubmit to your company ſo much,—or why I ſhould be ſo infatuated as to bury myſelf with you in ſuch dreary ſolitudes for the ſake of condoling with you in your diſtreſſes.

* The reader muſt obſerve that as theſe fair correſpondents, were on terms of the greateſt friendſhip and intimacy, there is a freedom of ſtyle, highly ludicrous, but perfectly agreeable in many of their letters, which would be inconſiſtent for any other perſons, not exactly under ſimilar circumſtances, to affect or imitate.

Sure

Sure it could be nothing elſe but compaſſion for your ſituation,—nothing but my own ſuperior goodneſs which could poſſibly have made me bear with a being ſo much inferior. To ſee you waſhing that pretty little innocent face with tears, if but his name was accidentally mentioned,——to behold the pearly drops ſhowering down in torrents when a ſtory was told of warriors glorioufly dying in their country's cauſe and laid in the earth ſo cold;—how often could I have beat you for a little idiot, if thoſe cryſtal-falling globules had not diſarm'd EVEN ME of the anger they excited. For a lover ſo far abſent too!—In truth had your part been mine, I ſhould have acted it very different I am certain. I would not have neglected ſo many ſweet ſighing ſwains

around

round—for one nobody knows where! I would not have ſacrificed my pleaſures and enjoyments—for ſuch a runagate ſwain,—but, making no more of the matter, after being in ſuch a manner deprived of one, I would embrace the firſt favorable opportunity to repair the loſs by accepting another. There would have been an end of grief and ſadneſs, I aſſure you. But you are ſuch a little wiſe-acre—tho' I believe indeed that nothing but love made you one grain more wiſe or more learned than myſelf——

For that ſhe'd watch at midnight's ſilent hour
And ſee the taper all its oil devour.

Forgive me, my ſweet friend—but I really do think had it not been for that ſoul-ruling power, love--that you would not

not have known whether the ſailor-guiding ſtar lay in the north or the weſt part of heaven.--But love and abſence--Oh! now I think of it——now that this laſt word has brought to my recollection what paſſed during this gloomy ſeaſon--ſome thing that may give pleaſure to your future lord and maſter has juſt occurred to me. What cannot love and abſence effect?—But I ſuppoſe your delicacy will not ſuffer him to ſee your poetry, or let him know how much you once thought of him. Perhaps you reſerve that pleaſure for a more diſtant ſeaſon,—or probably, when the fit takes you, he may by and by have the indulgence of a ſight of it;—but I will defeat THAT wicked plot however, and anticipate this reſerved ſatisfaction (hoping he will inſiſt on ſeeing this letter)

by

by ſending the verſes you wrote on that ſubject. The object, he will ſee is himſelf.

On ABSENCE, *by* MARIA.

ABSENCE!—thou cruel tort'rer of the heart,
Leſs ſharp the pangs when ſoul and body part;
Oh! why ſhould faithful boſoms ever know
That more than death which does theſe pangs beſtow,
When anguiſh trembles thro' the ſoften'd ſoul,
Dims pleaſure's rays, and does each joy controul,
Tears from the heart the peace it once poſſeſs'd
And fills with ſoft complaining all the breaſt.

Oh, love! thou ſacred God—whoſe potent ſway
All objects bow to—and all hearts obey—
Oh! why with anguiſh point thy fatal dart
To tear and agonize the feeling heart?
Why are thy faithful vot'ries doom'd to know
The varied conflicts of unceaſing woe?

Oh!

Oh! hear thou gentle God of ſoft deſire,
Whoſe influence does my ev'ry verſe inſpire,
To whom at morn my early vows I pay,
And only end them with the ſetting day;
Send—ſend him back, ſwift ſpeed him to my arms,
And huſh each fear this tortur'd heart alarms.
All penſive, ſad, looks all that pleas'd before,
And nature's beauties now delight no more.
Fair Cynthia's beams no longer light the plain
The fears of love eclipſe the ſtarry train.
Dark, dull, and dreary looks the once-gay ſhade,
Its pleaſures all are with my ſhepherd ſtray'd.
Then bring—oh! ſpeed him to his Laura's ſight,
And all will ſhine again more ſweetly bright—
The pangs will ceaſe which wound this aching breaſt.
And in his arms, all,—all, will ſink to reſt.

Mean while, ſweet bird, that at ſtill ev'ning hour,
Soft, penſive, warbling, ſing'ſt in yonder bow'r;

Whoſe

Whoſe plaintive notes rewake the ſleeping grove,
And ſoothe the melting ſoul to all I love;
Oh! bid thy ſiſter in her diſtant ſhade
Breathe all the wiſhes of a faithful maid;
Oh! ſay, for him how oft this boſom ſighs,
How oft for him—tears ſteep theſe aching eyes;
Oh! ſay—and and bid him, wing'd with mutual love,
Swift ſpeed him back, and all my fears remove.

Poor thing! how ſadly it complains! —why it will hardly know its own thoughts now.—Prophetic as theſe lines are of the tranſport expreſſed in its laſt letter, it will be ſaid perhaps that I have forged it.—But fortune, tho' a very ſlippery goddeſs, has for this once been my friend, for I have got this plaintive elegy in its own hand-writing.—Well! I proteſt I wiſh I could fall in love enough to write poetry; for whatever

ever they may talk of Apollo and his lyre as the only capable means of touching and ſenſibly affecting the ſtrings of the heart,—I am certain that Cupid is full as often the inſpirer of poetry, as his muſical Godſhip.

Mind this—if your ſhepherd in armour is ſo mighty delicate as not to inſiſt on ſeeing my letter, I will, I am reſolved, ſhew it to him when I come down. Till then, with my reſpects to your Colonel,

I remain

your's

LOUISA COLVILLE.

It was the purport of my letter to inform you that the illneſs of my mother (tho'

(tho' no ways dangerous) is ſuch as cannot permit me to be long abſent from her; therefore let me know when the happy day is fixed. You may, if you pleaſe, remember me to your Stanley, whom you make ſuch a fuſs about; yet I ſhan't forgive you, I aſſure you, much longer if you don't give me his ſtory. I ſhall pick it from you, when I come down, if poſſible, depend upon it.

Adieu—Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

Miſs MORETON *to Miſs* COLVILLE.

OH! my Louiſa, how little do you know of the heart of your Maria?—Not let him ſee how much I once thought of him!—I thought you had underſtood better the nature and tendency of thoſe ſentiments which your Maria hath entertained upon this ſubject,—and that whatever foibles ſhe may be inclined to, * concealment is not

* The Editor thinks proper to adverti ſe the reader that our heroine, when ſhe conſidered this

not amongſt the number of her failings; —ſuch a gueſt is incapable of reſting even one moment in a heart which cannot aſſuming an appearance it does not feel.—No, my Louiſa,—I ſhall never need diſguiſe with one to whom I muſt conſider it my greateſt happineſs to unfold my every thought,——on whom, next to Heaven, my every joy repoſes, and every hope is fixed. No, my gay friend, 'tis a plot I never formed,—therefore, why not let him know my thoughts of him?—Reſerve in love—is ſacrilege. I would glory in every diſplay

this concealment as a virtue and an indiſpenſible duty, was diſtinguiſhable for her ſecrecy; we are therefore to be cautious in confining this remark to what may very juſtly be imputed as feelings

play of a paſſion, which lifts us ſo r above the earth. His worth—his tues—merit my eſteem. Why ſhould I diſguiſe my feelings,—and refuſe that tribute to his merit, which my heart allows him? Our value for a worthy being adds ſomething to our own; and every opportunity we have of demonſtrating our partiality gives us the moſt exalted pleaſure, becauſe we are conſcious it is beſtowed on the truly deſerving.

But methinks you are already laughing at me,—and will ſay, "I am flying into the regions of romance to "fetch you a picture of happineſs, "which has no real exiſtence;—or, if "it does exiſt," you will add, "it is of "too ſhort a date in any reſpect to merit "your

not ur obſervance. It will fade," you —ll probably continue, " before we " have looked round;—its colours, " though glaring, are of ſo periſhing a " nature as to ſhrink under the touch,— " they are too fading to reſiſt the attack " of time."—I acknowledge, my friend, that ſuch in general is the fate of earthly joys; but mine, Louiſa, are not of that ſort,—they have been tried, as gold come out of the furnace, and can never know a change. When two hearts, whoſe mutual feelings riſe but to one wiſh,—when two ſuch as theſe meet,—Oh! my Louiſa, imagination cannot form even among beings of an higher order——fancy cannot conceive either more or greater bliſs. The pleaſures indeed which ariſe from the imagination and are produced by the fancy, are but

ſhort

ſhort liv'd,——the happineſs reſulting from, theſe can be but viſionary; but though, by opening our eyes a little, the illuſion would be plainly diſcernible,—why ſhould we think of removing it, ſo long as we are able to enjoy it?—why ſhould we admit any thing which can poſſibly make us miſerable, or in the ſmalleſt degree interrupt our peace, 'till the dream will no longer laſt.

They have all preſſed me ſo ſtrongly, and with ſuch united force, that—that Thurſday next is fixed for the day that is to give a new name to your friend, and conſign her to the object of her heart;—therefore ſhall expect you to-morrow. You will ſee that the time

is ſhort, in which your friend will continue to ſign herſelf

MARIA MORETON.

My beſt reſpects wait on your honored mother, and my ſolicitations for pardon in wiſhing to deprive her, even for ſo ſhort a time, of her amiable companion.—Charles Stanley will be happy in ſeeing you. With that ſweet diffident ſenſibility which accompanies every thing he does, he ſaid he ſhould be happy if I would ſend his reſpects to you.

LETTER

LETTER V.

Miſs COLVILLE *to Miſs* MORETON.

FAR in the wild regions of romance by all love's arrows.

And ſo, for one line, of which I can ſcarcely recollect the writing—I am to be tormented with your ſermonizing letters.—Indeed!——indeed, Madam—but however I will not be angry with you,—I cannot be diſpleaſed with any thing which falls from your pen, as I am certain it proceeds from the heart;

and 'tis [but] right we ſhould look with a fair eye on what we are venturing ſo much for. And when we have once paſſed the goal, and are tranſported to the other ſide the rubicon,—why, it is our own fault if we are fooliſh enough to make compariſons,—To look back with regret to the regions of peace and happineſs we have voluntarily abdicated, and therefore cannot hope to repoſſeſs,—would be to ſeek for matter to ground infelicity upon, and to open the doors to diſcontent and remorſe.

For my part, I am ſo extremely well ſatisfied with my preſent empire and reign that I ſhall never I believe renounce it; there is ſomething ſo pleaſing, ſo agreeable and ſo tranſcendently ſweet in the very idea of freedom, that I cannot

not bring myſelf to the moſt diſtant thoughts of parting with it, for ſo hazardous an exchange, and on ſo precarious a tenure.

Perhaps now you may think I am a little envious about it, and, like the craſty animal in the fable, rail at that which is out of my reach; but if you do think ſo, I can aſſure you that your thoughts do me injuſtice, and that you think very wrong. For I would not —no, I would not, for any thing I know of, allow a being formed of the ſame clay as myſelf to aſſume ſuch a ſuperiority as theſe haughty lords of the creation too often aſſert.——Power of happineſs!--let me but keep my freedom, and my prayers ſhall riſe as frequently to the ſkies as thoſe of any Nun ever

did to keep her from thinking of a world ſhe had been conſtrained to renounce, in obedience to the will of an unfeeling, unnatural parent.——But huſh! 'tis time to check this ludicrous ſtyle,—or the little God may ſeverely revenge his inſulted power, and dip his arrow more deeply in the ſubtle poiſon. So I'll ſtop in time,—and after telling you I only wrote this letter that I might not quarrel with you when I come; have only to ſay that I ſhall be with you almoſt as ſoon as the letter itſelf.

Your's,

LOUISA COLVILLE.

I do not care for your Stanley whom you make ſuch a fuſs about, I aſſure you; ſo he had beſt take care of himſelf, of which, if you pleaſe, you may give him notice, that he may not be diſappointed by relying in any reſpect upon my frankneſs, or preſuming in any ſhape upon my good-nature.

LETTER VI.

GEORGE VILLARS, *Esq*; *to* COLONEL BELLMOUR.

My dear friend,

I Know not in what language to clothe an excuſe for neglecting to comply with your kind, and, at any other time, your pleaſing requeſt. Tho' it coſts me the utmoſt pain to attempt it, be aſſured that neceſſity alone compels me to ſit down to frame one;—but it muſt be done, and why ſhould I heſitate about it?—Know then, without fur-

ther

ther prelude, that an accident has lately happened which deprives me of the unſpeakable pleaſure of gratifying the warmeſt wiſhes of my Bellmour,—of haſtening with an ardor inexpreſſible to congratulate my friend on his ſafe return from the regions of blood and ſlaughter.—How would it have added to my joy—how infinitely increaſed my ſatisfaction, could I have been preſent on that long-wiſh'd for day which will give happineſs to my friend, and recompenſe him for all the toil and labour, the fatigues and hardſhips he has undergone to accompliſh it.

But a ſiſter's indiſpoſition prevents your friend from embracing ſo much pleaſure,—an indiſpoſition of ſuch a nature as requires his perſonal atten-

tion, and leaves him only the ſatiſfaction of wiſhing, with the warmeſt ſenſations of the moſt laſting friendſhip, every happineſs to his Bellmour, which he can fondly hope and has every reaſon to expect. In the poſſeſſion of ſo amiable an object,—how can he be otherwiſe than happy; with the proſpect of that poſſeſſion,—how muſt his ſpirits, his ſentiments, his whole ſoul be exalted to degrees of extaſy!

Be aſſured, my dear Bellmour, that I will embrace the earlieſt poſſible opportunity of paying my reſpects to you and to the amiable object of your affection, *in propriâ perſona*, to whom, I doubt not, you will very ſoon be indiſſolubly united. And though I ſhall be deprived of the pleaſure and the honor

honor of being preſent at your nuptials, and of the ſatisfaction I ſhould feel at the very moment of my friend's being happy by receiving the hand of his adorable fair-one,—yet I hope in ſome meaſure to ſupply that loſs by a profuſion of congratulations when an opportunity preſents itſelf. As ſoon as the happy event takes place, I loſe no time in communicating the heart-felt intelligence to your impatient and expecting friend,

G. VILLARS.

LETTER VII.

COLONEL BELLMOUR *to* GEORGE VILLARS, *Esq.*

Dear George,

AS the occaſion of your abſence made a compliance with your and my own wiſhes impracticable, your apology is accepted;——though that abſence—I was going to ſay—leſſened the happineſs of a day I ſhall ever hold the firſt of my life.—But allow me to recal the expreſſion,—even allow me, —you muſt,—you will allow me to ſay —you

—you was even forgotten moſt part of it; if I ſay otherwiſe, you know my heart too well to credit it.—My heart was too full even for one thought to enter it; totally abſorbed in contemplating my happineſs.——Oh! my friend,—to be poſſeſſed of ſuch a bleſſing as heaven that morning conſigned to the arms of your Bellmour,—to call it all our own—to know ſuch lovely eyes ſhine but for us,—what a feaſt for ſentiment is conveyed in the thought? reflection feeds unſatiated there.—— Heaven, when it left us ſuch a ſource of happineſs as THAT in the ſoul,—— greatly compenſated our firſt loſt paradiſe. It left us no room to grieve at our hard fate,—no cauſe to complain of our deſtiny.—Oh! George, ——'tis a prize not often found,——a

jewel

jewel, tranſcendently valuable,——a prize, infinitely ſurpaſſing any thing the world can beſtow.—A woman—poſſeſſed of ſenſe, lenity, and beauty,—what does ſhe not equal?—what does ſhe not excel?—what is the whole eaſtern world to ſuch a treaſure?—what are crowns?—the heart poſſeſſing ſuch excellence, and conſcious of its worth,—would not exchange it to be made vice-gerent of heaven, and maſter of every thing elſe in all creation's treaſures. I could expatiate on the pleaſing ſubject till I had loſt myſelf,—embelliſh the deſcription with all the beauties of language, with the ſublimity of the poet, and grace of the orator,—and yet fall infinitely ſhort of but even a faint repreſentation.—But whither am I wandring?—I meant

but

but to write a line or two, and my pen is running riot to my intention,—ſo that I muſt break my way through at once, and come to that which was the purport of my writing; which was to tell you that yeſterday morning made me the happieſt of the race of men.—Believe me, George, (for I fear that vanity has a place in the heart of moſt mortals,—only ſome times it wants incentives to call it forth and ſhew it,) I looked at that glorious luminary of the day—and my heart ſeemed proudly to aſk him if his rays ever beheld ſo bleſt a being. Oh! man! man! man! how weak in pleaſure and how weak in pain! —I believe, George, if the enemies of EVEN the beſt of men were to ſee the folly and weakneſs of his heart at ſome hours of its exiſtence,—it would have

little

little reaſon to triumph over the meaneſt of its foes. I need not repeat my requeſt or remind you of the pleaſure I ſhall have in ſeeing you, my dear friend, to participate the happineſs of him who is more than ever your's,

BELLMOUR.

LETTER VIII.

GEORGE VILLARS *Esq*; *to* COLONEL BELLMOUR.

TO wiſh you happineſs, when poſſeſs'd of it,——and if not, well convinced it is not in the power of any perſon to give it,—ſeems to me an abſurd, a ridiculous compliment. —I hardly know how to ſuffer my pen to write the common expreſſion, which no doubt you will have from every quarter; my heart feels too much to make uſe of ſuch a formal and cere-

monious

monious ſtyle. You will believe me when I tell you that my ſoul wiſhes you more than in language I can find words wherewith to expreſs my feelings.

I had fully intended being with you on that happy day, when you was united to the moſt aimable of women. But the morning in which I propoſed to commence my journey was uſhered in by an accident which I barely adverted to in my laſt apology,—the recital of which is even now too melancholy to be entered upon. If I was to relate it, your heart would ache at the ſorrowful account; and for this reaſon, at a time like the preſent, it is certainly moſt adviſable to poſtpone it.——For many days of

true

true happineſs do not fall to the lot of us mortals in general, therefore thoſe which do, ought to be held ſacred, and as ſuch ſhall not be intruded on by me. Your heart, I am convinced, will ever feel much from the affair I am alluding to,—and though I ſhall not trouble you with the recital of it now; you may ſoon depend upon having it from me.—But what ſhall I then proceed to acquaint you with?—alas! how little do I know myſelf?——I have touched upon the awful tale, and my ſoul is even now ſo full of it, that every other idea is abſorded in this;—my pen alſo ſeems as it were to catch its feelings, to act in uniſon with the heart, and will not ſuffer me to paſs it. It ſeems to whiſper me in ſtill, but ſolemn ſounds,—"why

not

"not now record the memory of ſuch "an unhappy, and fatal act?—why not "preſerve every circumſtance of the "melancholy iſſue of truth and fidelity?" I muſt obey the impulſe,—the tale of tenderneſs and woe muſt now be recited.—Tho' ſorrowful,—to a heart like your's—even at this time,—this ſeaſon of happineſs and of tranſport,—it may not prove wholly unacceptable; and if you are not diſpoſed for a tale of ſorrow,—e'en ſtop here, without proceeding in the narrative, and throw it by for another hour.———— The ſtory is this.—A young man the ſon of a reputable landholder in our village, had long paid his addreſſes to the beautiful and amiable daughter of a neighbouring farmer,—whoſe perſonal accompliſhments could only be ex-

exceeded by the invaluable endowments of her mind.—The friends of each party ſeemed perfectly agreeable; and the moſt rational proſpect of a ſpeedy union preſented itſelf to their mutual ſatisfaction.——On account of ſome difference concerning a piece of ground which the young woman's father had purchaſed, which not only lay contiguous to the property of the other, but which he was actually and knowingly in treaty about,——the father * forbids the ſon, on pain of being for

* What a mortifying conſideration muſt it have been for theſe mercenary and ſelfiſh parents to reflect, that to one imprudent and unjuſtifiable act ſuch a train of conſequences ſhould ſucceed, as ſerved to embitter all their future days, and was the cauſe of their dragging

for ever diſinherited, either to ſpeak to or think any more of the dear object of his inviolable affection.—The ſame command was, with equal ſeverity, delivered to her;—ſo that thoſe verdant fields and flowery meads which had ſo often been the theatre where their tales of love had been uttered from the lips of truth, were no longer, at the cloſe of day, when induſtry had finiſhed her labour,——were no longer, the retreat of happineſs.—— Often had he been ſeen traverſing the

ging out a life of miſery and deſpair!—How many parents, from motives of avarice, act in a manner equally culpable, for the ſake of ſome trifling advantages infinitely of leſs importance either to themſelves as individuals, or others as members of ſociety! Editor.

once

once-delightful ſpot,——and, perhaps, with heart-felt grief and ſorrow, comparing his former happineſs with his preſent wretched condition;—often had he been ſeated on the banks of the ſtream which run along near the once-happy place where they ſo frequently had met,—increaſing with his tears the ſenſeleſs flood.——At length, through the kind aſſiſtance of my ſiſter, who is now inconſolable at the reflection of what has happened,—at length by this friendly, though unfortunate aid, he was bleſs'd with the unſpeakable happineſs to meet the idol of his ſoul.—The opportunity was too momentous to be trifled away,——their time was ſhort,—but, alas! with the beſt intentions, their improvement of it was productive of the moſt diſaſtrous conſequences

ſequences.——Love's power and force ſet aſide the conſiderations of filial duty;—the beautiful villager (for he was equally handſome and pleaſing as a man as ſhe was for a woman),—the enraptured pair concerted a plan to elope in the ſtill calm of the night, and to put it out of the reach of parental tyranny to prevent their union. —They put their ſcheme in execution, and had travelled a few miles from their home,——when in croſſing a rivulet which would have led them by a path conſiderably ſhorter to the houſe of the honeſt vicar of the pariſh,—when in croſſing ſuch rivulet by means of a narrow plank, unfortunately,—from the agitation of her heart and the precipitancy of her ſtep,—this beautiful damſel ſlipped from the arm of her faithful

ful lover, and down ſhe fell into the gulph below.—Wild and diſtracted at his loſs, he inſtantly leap'd in,—and, from the faint glimmerings of the moon, half obſcured by the interpoſition of ſlight but paſſing clouds, diſcovered after ſome conſiderable time the luckleſs object of his ſearch, and brought her to ſhore.—But who can paint his anguiſh,—what pen can delineate his diſtraction,—when he found,—too ſadly found ſhe was dead.—It was too ſhocking to ſuſtain;—with wild and frantic,—with heart-rending horror, he caught her in his arms,—he ſeized the pale, the ghaſtly corpſe with a violence which demonſtrated the agitation of his mind,—gave a deep heart-piercing groan and expired.—A little boy, the brother of the young man, had accom-

panied them;—he return'd,—inſtantly return'd with the dreadful tidings,——and the unhappy, the diſconſolate parents, too late, too fatally feel the conſequences of endeavouring, of wiſhing to check and controul a mutual love, which they themſelves had fed,—a love founded on the beſt, the pureſt motives,——on thoſe of truth, virtue, and honor.—They were this morning interr'd in one grave —and a monument will be erected to their memory at the joint expence of their friends, to perpetuate their conſtancy and inviolate affection to the lateſt times;—they were attended by all the youths and maidens of the village, who wept over the the tomb of the faithful but unfortunate fugitives,—the real tears of ſenſibility and friendſhip.—At any

other

other time I know you would excuſe me for dwelling on ſo melancholy a ſubject,—and I have much confidence in your candour at preſent for the moſt favorable interpretation of my motives in reciting it;—but what adds to my concern in the affair, is—that my ſiſter, of whom ſhe was a great favorite,—that my ſiſter, finding, as I intimated, that they dragged on a life of miſery, and probably thinking that the parents might afterwards be induced to forgive,—had, at their earneſt and importunate interceſſion, ſpoken to the clergyman already mentioned, that two ſtrangers, whoſe parents ſhe well knew, would be ready to be married on ſuch a day.——He relied on my ſiſter's well-known goodneſs and veracity,—he was ſatisfied.—And though

the intent was good,—-yet the fatal diſaſter has fixed ſuch a gloom and melancholy on her mind,-——as very much alarms me.—Make my reſpects to your lovely bride, and believe me ever wiſhful for the happineſs of Bellmour; on which occaſion none is more happy in congratulating you than is,

Your's

G. VILLARS.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

COLONEL BELLMOUR *to* GEORGE VILLARS, *Esq.*

Dear George,

THE feelings of ſenſibility, and the forms and appearance of it, are ever at the greateſt diſtance from each other;—the one is directed by faſhion and caprice,—the other affects, exalts, and improves the mind.—In ſpite of the gay ſeaſon, in which your letter arrived,—after dinner I read it to our party,——being determined to ſupply

the want of your perſonal preſence by preſenting the genuine image of your mind;—all were affected by it,—the tears of ſenſibility bath'd the lovely cheeks of my Maria.—I then wiſh'd to be alone—to hug the ſweet, tender, and ſympathiſing ſoul in my boſom. —Sweet ſenſibility!—delicious eſſence of every thing that is lovely on earth, —how does thy charms delight!—— Such ſentiments——ſuch feelings——ſo pure, ſo exquiſitely fine, muſt make beauty reſiſtleſs,—and even deformity pleaſing.—But the affectation of it,— when it riſes not from the real and genuine feelings of the heart,--how deteſtable!—and of all hypocriſy the moſt diſcernible.—I do not mean by ſenſibility hat weakneſs which affects to ſhrink from every tale of woe.—No—where

the

the fine heart is attuned to feelings of the moſt delicate nature,——where the original correſponds with ſo beautiful a title page;———the features of the face will in thoſe caſes ſpeak the language of the heart--How deliciouſly enchanting does human nature appear! —how tranſcendently enrapturing is the force of beauty!—The ſtory is affecting.——Faithful unhappy pair! —Oh! my friend, what complicated miſeries frequently fall to the lot of the righteous!—what proofs of calamities await the virtuous!—inſtances there are ſo many and ſo numerous, that they almoſt incline men to diſbelieve the opinion that a ſuperior being regards and ſurveys the actions of mankind,—they almoſt tempt the unhappy and diſtreſſed to let go that anchor of

hope and confidence, which alone can bear them up amidſt difficulties and misfortunes.—But this muſt be imputed to the narrow and confined limits of our faculties;———for happineſs and miſery are ſo deeply ſeated,—and ſo impenetrable their exiſtence to the ſearch of men, that we cannot aſſert with certainty what is ſo.—Even that ill-fated pair——who knows, by that ſtroke of Providence, from what miſeries they were ſaved!—Perhaps their unfeeling parents, had deſigned them or prepared them at leaſt to ſeek from ſtrangers a ſupport which, in the frenzy of their rage and fury, they would have denied.—Perhaps ſhe might have been driven to ſolicit ſuccour from aliens, to prolong a miſerable exiſtence,——with an infant weeping in her boſom,

or, what ſhall I ſay, perhaps as unconſcious of its mother's woes, as her hard-hearted parents were unfeeling and relentleſs. Scorched or overpowered with the ſummer's ſultry ſun, or pinched and ſhrivelled with the winter's chilling blaſts,——ſtruggling with want, and half-periſhing with famine,——who knows but a gracious Providence—to ſave them from ſuch accumulated hardſhips and diſtreſſes —dealt the fatal blow.—The thought is at leaſt pleaſing, and I will think it, my friend.—I know with the generality of the beings of this world,—that the poſſeſſion of its goods and the attainment of the means which are ſuppoſed to conſtitute greatneſs,——are thought ſufficient indications of happineſs and felicity;——but how very

often is it, that they are really the moſt diſtant from it.—The heart of man is a temple unſearchable;—and it is not without the aſſiſtance of higher capacities, that we can aſcertain the dwellers of it.—Happineſs or miſery are not eaſily diſcernible; they are hid from the eye in the ſacred foldings of the heart above it. From that center, how often is content diffuſed even through the frame of wretchedneſs!—how often is extreme miſery, tho' bleſſed with wealth and beauty and every external advantage of life, derived from the ſame ſource! The obſervation or the eye of man cannot ſay with certainty that it is here or there;—both are frequently met with—to appearance—in their oppoſites, ſince a virtuous mind ſtruggling under all the apparent

apparent evils of this life ſtill poſſeſſes a fund for content within,—a fund, greater than even that mind could perhaps itſelf have found in any other ſtate than this of care and affliction. The ſtate of man is a ſtate of Hope, and as Pope juſtly obſerves,

He never is,—but always to be bleſt.

While we are climbing, hope tempts us to the ſtep, and ſweetens the rugged path that leads to it; but we no ſooner reach the goal, and attain to the ſummit of our wiſhes than it leaves us——and we——who, when lowly ſituated on the plains, had placed content and every bleſſing there, find our diſappointment.—Reſtleſs and unſettled we look round and round with

eager, anxious eyes, for ſomething more. —She only who has nothing to wiſh for, is the only happy being; ſhe alone who is contented in her ſituation, is capable of enjoying felicity. —But thoſe who, for want of a due ſenſe of our obligations to providence, ——who ſlight the favors of heaven, and conſider not the expediency and advantages of virtue,—who place every thing in this world, and hope for nothing in the next,—thoſe are indeed the only miſerable.--The inſtances of miſery among the virtuous cannot therefore be conſidered as any proofs, that the affairs of men are not regarded by a ſuperior power,——ſince that has placed a ſomething in the mind which enlivens it amidſt the deepeſt gloom, and renders even its pains ſubſervient

ſervient to its advantage and improvement. This in a general ſurvey of life, is too eaſily obſerved to be doubted,—and, if we might be allowed to conſider it in a religious view, may be proved even to conviction. A mind which is torn from happineſs in this world,——from which the ſources of comfort are withheld, and to which the pleaſures and enjoyments of life are denied,—eaſily repairs the loſs;—it can ſeek for felicity in another ſtate, where it will be ſure to find the bleſſing, where Hope ſteps in to aſſure it of its exiſtence there.

But happineſs may be found, even in the preſent life.——It is alike the inmate of every boſom;—it has a ſeat in every heart, only all do not know how

how to treat the lovely gueſt,—but force it with regretting diſcontent,—with reluctant uneaſineſs to quit the dwelling.———The world in general eſteem the unequal diſtributions of fortune as the unequal diſtributions of providence,—how abſurd!—Might not we as well ſay—the man who at a feaſt gorges and ſwallows the portion of many, is happier than he who moderately but with the higheſt ſenſe of taſte and reliſh, partakes of the bounty of nature;—whereas the truth is,—that HE more perfectly enjoys,—far more truly enjoys the pleaſures of life, than the other.—The greedy wretch who is ſatiated with luxuries,—whoſe appetite is palled with dainties,——never truly knows the ſenſations reſulting from the act of proper refreſh-

ment

ment.—Adieu—my lovely Bride waits breakfaſt,—Friendſhip, adieu for Love,

BELLMOUR.

Let me, I beg of you, ſee you ſoon.

LETTER

LETTER X.

Miſs COLVILLE *to Mrs.* BELLMOUR.

Oh ma chère amie,

YOU know not with what regret I travelled home, after having been a witneſs to ſo much felicity as you now enjoy.——All the way was my heart affected by ſenſations, which you will much more eaſily conceive than I can deſcribe.———It requires the utmoſt reſolution to leave our friends, even when we are only exchanging one circle for another, which may

may ſeem to demand an equal ſhare of our attention.—In ſhort, I aſſure you that I was ſo very melancholy, as ſcarcely left it in my power to force a ſmile to my dear mother's ſalutation; nor have I been able to ſum up my ſpirits ſince.—But perhaps—no indeed, you may think as you pleaſe,—perhaps you may think that I am already begining to envy you,—but ſurely it is not in the power of Maria,—it cannot enter into her breaſt to ſuppoſe any thing ſo improbable, ſo unlikely. The thought would do me a wrong, which could not eaſily be atoned for.—Envy you!—gracious heav'n!—I may perhaps wiſh myſelf as happy,—but, to envy the felicity of my friends, how prepoſterous!—Then perhaps you may ſay that I envy your ſtate,—there in-

deed

deed, you may be a little nearer in your conjecture,—though I truſt it is not of that ſort which may be deemed culpable. Indeed, to ſpeak truly, I cannot ſay that my reſolution has not been a little ſtaggered;—and perhaps, if that imaginary being which is mentioned by the celebrated Author of the Indian Philoſopher, as ſent from heaven for us,—if HIS appearance ſhould be announced, I am not miſtreſs enough of my own thoughts to inſure the reſult of ſuch a viſit.——But if he was ever near us, it is very doubtful whether he has not loſt his way.

You will not wonder that I was laſt night in the thinking humour, conſidering how much my mind has been employed ſince I left you;—the effects

of

of thoſe thoughts might as well fill up this letter, as any thing elſe I can ſend you. Well,—as you have formerly exerted your powers in poetic phraſe,—allow me to ſend you mine,—Oh, no,—I ſhould have ſaid in rhyme; for as you will ſee thereby that I ſhould have no great objection to change my ſtate, if I could meet with a being conformable t omy wiſhes. —I have only to hope that a model of perfection in man can ſcarcely be ſuppoſed to exiſt without its fellow.

Long, long like Noah's dove around
My reſtleſs heart has ſtray'd;
That bliſs of life was ſtill unfound,
A ſoul congenial made!

Where

Where thought all mutual, ſtill meets thought,
And mind embraces mind,
Tho' failing ſtill the youth I ſought,
None ſuch to me inclin'd.

Perhaps in journ'ing from the ſkies
He chanc'd aſide to ſtray,
And ever ſince in vain he tries
To find his long, loſt way.

And are we doom'd, Oh! fate unkind!
In this life thoſe to meet,
Who in ſoft bliſs no more confin'd
No joys can e'er repeat.

Oh! would the fav'ring ſtar that led
The wiſemen's faithful way
To the high, heav'n-born infant's bed
My ſteps to him convey?

I'd rove Arabia's ſun-burnt ſands,
Or cold Siberia's waſte;
O'er roaring waves or hoſtile lands
My feet ſhould fearleſs haſte.

Not

Not worlds of wealth ſhould me detain,
Or keep one thought away;
The mines of rich Peru, in vain
Should tempt my ſteps to ſtray.

Then, tell me where,—ſome angel tell
Where dwells the form unknown;
Direct me to ſome hermit's cell
Who does the world diſown.

Then, oh! dear form, whoſe ſettled mind
Beats ſympathy to mine;
To place or clime where'er confin'd
I'd wing my way to thine.

Perhaps the ſtar that gilds the morn
May light my lonely way;
By philoſophic eaſe forborn,
I far from crouds may ſtray.

Perhaps on Perſia's throne—Oh! no,
Quick ſtop ſuch rapid flight;
Thy kindred-ſoul in form more low
Muſt ſhun the dazzling height.

Perhaps

Perhaps on Alpine hills he leads
Serene his rural flocks,
The Banks of Tagus, muſing treads,
Or climbs the ſnow-cloath'd rocks.

In this bleſs'd ſtate,—with thee how pleas'd
My feet untir'd could ſtray,
Tho' falling ſnow around us freez'd
And Phœbus hid his ray.

With ſouls above the leaſt diſguiſe
We'd tread the happy grove;
No thoughts in either heart ſhould riſe
Untaught by truth and love.

At eve, dear youth, I'd ſmooth thy bed
With ſoft leaves gather'd round;
The ſtreams that gently paſſing ſtray'd
Should ſoothe thee with its ſound.

We'd weep or ſmile—untaught by art,
To nature's precepts true;
As ſhe inform'd the feeling heart,
We wou'd her paths purſue.

But

But if on earth we ne'er muſt meet,
This bliſs in hope is giv'n,
In joys, which fate can ne'er defeat,
Our ſouls ſhall join in heav'n.

There, now——don't you think, that if ſome of my obliging friends among the other ſex, ſhould venture to diſcloſe ſentiments of a more particular nature,—of which we know ſome that are an honor to human nature,—that I ſhould quickly incline to their ſolicitations.——But perhaps you were never more miſtaken in your life,—for I can aſſure you of this, that though ſome perſons, if they were acquainted with ſuch promiſes as theſe, might be glad to catch at me,—yet you may believe me when I tell you that

that I am determined to take care of myſelf in ſpite of them all, and to preſerve that heart in my own poſſeſſion which would not eaſily endure a maſter,---- ſo you may tell your young Stanley, whom you make ſuch a fuſs about,—(and after all, he is but a dull, inſipid youth of nineteen, with as much ſenſibility as ever had a young mind in love)—that he has but little chance, ſo he had beſt take care of himſelf while he is ſafe.

Adieu, my friend,

Your's ever,

LOUISA COLVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

Mrs. BELLMOUR *to Miſs* COLVILLE.

My dear Louiſa,

THAT amiable gaiety of heart which you poſſeſs is ſo truly agreeable, that I would not wiſh to take it from you, to place either ſullen melancholy or gloomy reflection there.——These are the gueſts that often come unwiſhed for, and ought never to be invited.—Yet, my Louiſa, I am greatly apprehenſive you have, perhaps unwillingly and unknowingly,

added to the natural penſiveneſs of my dear Charles;—he has been more ſo than uſual ſince you left us,——nor have I yet been able to gueſs at the cauſe, or in the ſmalleſt degree to divine the occaſion of it, unleſs I may hazard a conjecture that my ſweet friend is concerned in the change.—If ſo,—if this ſhould prove to be the caſe,—I will not ſay that I ſhall love her leſs, but I am afraid it will not be in my power to love her more than before.—Theſe are ſentiments of my heart,—nor can you poſſibly know how to account for theſe ſenſations, without being acquainted with the cauſe, which would inform you of what makes him ſo dear to me.—But this once known, you will no longer wonder that he is ſo.—The

remembrance

remembrance of one, who,—had ſhe been even a ſtranger,—endured ſuch afflictions in this world,——makes me ever attentive to his wiſh, and deſirous to contribute every thing in my power to promote and advance his felicity;———and in order to enſure that eſteem which ſuch remembrance would always command,——his own virtues, his endearing accompliſhments, his refined and elevated ſoul, will always enforce reſpect and veneration.—He is ignorant, poor young man, even of his own hiſtory;—he knows not his birth, and is only conſcious of his dependance. He feels it with anxiety and with concern;—not from any diſſatisfaction with his condition, but from a ſecret wiſh to know more of himſelf, his friends, and his kindred.—

His ſenſibility,--his refined and delicate ſenſations, have drawn from me thoſe teſtimonies of my regard for him which he cannot miſtake.—-But he is, my Louiſa, a moſt valuable being,—and, at that moment, at that very moment of unutterable bliſs and unſpeakable rapture, the arrival of my Bellmour, —had the grim king of terrors claimed a life even at that inſtant, I know not which I could have moſt eaſily reſigned;—but the will of heaven will, I hope, keep me long from feeling that which would be worſe than death, the agony I ſhould experience in the loſs of either.—Dear ill-fated youth! he has, my Louiſa, a claim upon the tie of humanity;—he is an orphan.—Oh! my friend, this laſt word has ſomething in it ſo affecting as ſtrikes irreſiſtibly

reſiſtibly the moſt pungent ſorrow and anguiſh to my heart.—I have often thought, or rather attempted to think, —what muſt be the agony of a parent at the laſt cloſing hour of life, who leaves an infant unfriended and expoſed to the wide world, and liable to the inſults of the pitileſs and inhuman—if any body, my Louiſa, thus felt and thought for them as I do,——the bowels of compaſſion, to which they have ſo much claim, would not be cloſed upon them.——Do not think that by this I have the moſt diſtant intention to pay any compliment to myſelf,——on the contrary I would willingly hope there are thouſands in the world, whoſe train of thinking is exactly ſimilar to my own; but it muſt be regretted that there are

millions who would be ſo far from commiſerating their condition or redreſſing their calamity, that they would take every advantage of their helpleſs and unhappy ſtate.—Mighty god of heaven! of what flinty materials muſt they be formed?—I ſhould think that the ſhade of the unhappy parents, tortured with agonies inexpreſſible and inconceivable, would preſent itſelf to me in all the horrors of diſtraction,—if I was capable of injuring or even ſlighting a fellow creature who was friendleſs.

But what muſt be the feelings of ſenſibility,—the reflections of the refined and exalted mind,—whoſe ſenſations acquaint him with the cares of the world before he knows it!—

to

to feel himſelf obliged to thoſe for the ſupport and exiſtence of life, where there can be no tye but that of humanity!——this preys deeply, very deeply, on a generous mind,——and to lighten that burthen ſhould be the care, the buſineſs of every friendly heart.—This is a taſk, which I am daily endeavouring, but in vain, to effect;—to accompliſh this deſirable object has long been my moſt earneſt wiſh, but hitherto my exertions have been uſeleſs.—With my poor Stanley, all theſe efforts have been loſt; a deeper melancholy ſeems to ſettle upon him.—I have endeavoured to explore the cauſe, but in vain.—Sometimes I fear he thinks Col. Bellmour has not that degree of friendſhip for him he expected to find.—I am ſtrengthned

ned in this conjecture from having accidenttally overheard him as he was walking in his room,——ſeemingly in great confuſion and agitation of ſpirits.—He thought himſelf alone, and had not the leaſt ſuſpicion that any one heard him, when he thus expreſſed the ſtate of his mind;—"So "many friends," he ſaid "could not "fall to the lot of one, who was, "as it were, an outcaſt of the world, "—he has been too good to me,— "he cannot have all that regard for "me, a mere diſconſolate orphan, with- "out friends or protection, which his "politeneſs and condeſcenſion ſeem "to ſhew."—In this incoherent and inconſiſtent manner does he reflect upon his ſituation, and in ſuch wild and unaccountable ſtrains does he frequently

frequently diſburden his mind. The other day I gently endeavoured to draw his cauſe of melancholy from him,——and, after ſome introductory converſation, aſked him if he was unhappy, and what was the cauſe of that diſquiet with which his heart was evidently affected;——that if any thing lay in my power to remedy his unhappineſs, it ſhould be done without delay, to reſtore peace and ſatisfaction to his breaſt.—" Deareſt " madam, " anſwered he, " your " kindneſs overwhelms me, and it " is only your too-much goodneſs " which diſtreſſes my ſoul.——I am " an orphan;—I bluſh, I fear,—but " how can I look forward without " anxious apprehenſions, or turn my " thoughts back without perplexing

 " doubts.

" doubts."—He ſaid no more,—but withdrew;—his diſtreſs had forced a tear from my eye,—and at that moment Col. Bellmour entered.——I thought he was diſpleaſed,—but was ſoon, as I conjecture, agreeably undeceived. —He ſoon cleared up his countenance, and acquitted himſelf.——I wiſh'd to ſpeak on the ſubject, with which my thoughts were ſo deeply engroſs'd, and turn advocate for my poor Charles; —but he ſeemed (for my fears made me imagine it,)—he ſeemed to avoid it, and changed the diſcourſe into another channel. Here then it ended; but my own anxiety was doubly increaſed.———Dear unhappy youth! thought I at that inſtant,—why did thy dying mother's ſenſibility by her ſolemn injunctions involve thee in a cloud

cloud of darkneſs impenetrable, which I fear will overſhadow thy future days, and prey upon thy feeling heart!

I wiſh Col. Bellmour would conſider of ſomething for him,——perhaps a commiſſion would not be diſagreeable; this might be very eaſily done, and would render him in ſome degree independent in life.——This, I hope, would ſerve a little to diſpel that extreme ſenſibility, which too often involves its children in unmerited misfortune;—and tend to overcome that penſive melancholy, with which his too-ſuſceptible heart is ſo deeply affected.—I ſhall endeavour to diſcover his inclinations ſoon, and to ſolicit his attention to ſo important a buſineſs;——and as Col. Bellmour is

totally unacquainted with his ſtory, I ſhall,——if I find it will be of any ſervice to Stanley,—unfold a part of is,——enough to engage him in his intereſt, as I think my Bellmour's generous ſoul will then eſteem him the more.—I am often going to relate it, but, I know not how, I am as often reſtrained from it, by ſome means or other to me unaccountable; I cannot repeat it, tho' ſo frequently deſiring to do it.

How often, my Louiſa, have I lamented that reſtriction which the dying unhappily lay on their friends—too often to their laſting miſery; I hope my laſt hour, Louiſa, will leave the

living

living free,——and my parting breath invoke no wiſh—but to that power who gave it,

Adieu,

my lovely Friend

MARIA BELLMOUR.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

GEORGE VILLARS *Esq*; *to* COLONEL BELLMOUR.

My dear Friend,

IT is a common obſervation that among the concerns of this world, the thorns of adverſity are ſo thickly interwoven, that even the moſt exalted ſtation is not free from them, nor the moſt flouriſhing condition altogether exempt from care and anxiety!—But then let us conſider, my friend, that among theſe thorns are

are ſome roſes of pleaſure, if we will only take the pains to gather and preſerve them.———Nature and providence have not been ſcanty in their bounty;—the flowers of happineſs grow in ſufficient abundance to adminiſter comfort and conſolation to the moſt afflicted.—Content is a ſacred plant,—rooted in the hearts of all;—though few—very few give the friendly gueſt a welcome reception,—but treat her with a kind of ſullen contempt.—Content—ſhe is the ſoul of every bleſſing,—the ſource of every felicity which heaven can confer upon man,—the brighteſt Cherub among the heavenly choir.—Content, with reluctance and regret, gives way to the gloom of diſſatisfaction and unhappineſs;—ſhe purſues men to the laſt

laſt with tenders of her ſervices, and, in pure compaſſion, intreats them to comply with her friendly ſolicitations. —When the angel, with the flaming ſword, guarded the gates of the terreſtrial paradiſe, to prevent the return of the firſt parents of mankind to the delightful ſpot,—even then, in this greateſt of their affliction, ſhe followed them with ſeraph's wings, and ſpread before them her ſacred treaſures.—Happineſs and miſery, my friend, are alike the inhabitants of every climate, and denizens of every nation and country; —'tis the form of government only which permits it to flouriſh, or checks its attempts to ſpring up to maturity —that, by a genial warmth and nurture, encourages the kindly growth, or chills and freezes the tender bud

of

of life in all the nations of the world. —As the people of every clime owe their felicity, or their wretchedneſs to the diſpoſition of their rulers, juſt ſo does the peace or unhappineſs of man proceed from that ſource of all his pleaſures or his woes,—the heart. —Why has it been aſſerted, that genius is a ſtranger to the eaſtern world? —that the clime is unfavorable to the cultivation of knowledge, and to the promoting of uſeful arts and the improvement of inſtructive ſcience? —It is naturally the ſame in every clime and country;—it is the deſpotiſm of government which kills and poiſons the riſing plants, which deprives the ſeeds of their vegetative faculties, and is the occaſion of their periſhing.—Where ſuperſtition, with all

all her haggard train,——the almoſt certain conſequents of arbitrary and tyrannic ruſe,——have once gained the poſt of eminence;—as this will convert the moſt beautiful groves into the moſt ſolitary deſerts,—ſo will it ſubdue every effort of genius, and cramp the ſoul in her laudable deſires. —The iron hand of oppreſſion,—— the fears of jealouſy,—the chimeras of imagination,—and the violence of power,——make genius no very deſirable poſſeſſion;—ſo long as the ſoul of ſuch a man inhabits its priſon of clay,—ſome fell tyrant, inflated with pride, or fearfully dreading to find a foe concealed in the perſon of his neareſt friend, will ever be meditating ſomething hoſtile to its peace and tranquility.—In every form and

in

in every ſhape, he has cauſe to look for that which may put a period to his exiſtence;——and he is as it were compelled to live loſt to the world, in expectation, however diſtant, of finding in death a releaſe from pain, ——though in ſome countries, ſuch is the cruel and relentleſs policy where the curſed power of prieſts prevail, there is too frequently cauſe to deſpair even of that.

Let us but turn our eyes to India, —a country the moſt fertile by nature, and the moſt luxuriant in the means of improvement;——there we behold a wretched, ſlothful people, ——debaſed by ſlavery,——without love for the public welfare,—without any elevation of ſoul,—without diſcipline

cipline, and without *courage.—There we may behold a race of men, which, though born under the fineſt climate of the earth, are ren-

* The Editor has here taken the liberty of ſuppreſſing two or three reflections, ariſing from the conſideration of want of courage in the eaſtern nations. Accounts of a different nature, confirmed by too fatal experience, have been received; the tranſactions of the laſt war in that quarter of the globe are but too well authenticated teſtimonies to the contrary,—but whether this ſhould be attributed to courage, or to a ſavage brutality, he muſt leave his fair readers to determine. Some other liberties have been taken with this letter, which probably our fair Author, had ſhe lived, would have corrected,——as it appears to have been written when her health was much impaired.

dered

dered incapable of taſting or reliſhing thoſe enjoyments which it affords; —enervated and ſunk in diſſipation and indolence,—and regardleſs of the future good of any amongſt them, —they ſleep away their lives in a ſenſeleſs inactivity,———Such is the fatal effects of deſpotiſm;—ſuch is the means which tend to the production of thoſe effects.———Whereas the ſoul of a man which ſoars above the common level, and is envious of its worth, muſt groan under the burden, and feel the weight of the cumbrous load;—the ſtate and condition of that generous aſpiring fire which glows in the human breaſt, muſt cauſe it to ſhrink at the view of ſuperſtition and bigotry.—Gracious heaven! —why are ſuch deſpotic, ſuch arbitrary

trary rulers, ſuffered to exiſt but for a moment, to tyrannize and oppreſs at pleaſure their inferiors and ſlaves? —-why are they ſuffered to breathe the untainted air, in common with the meek and gentle of the earth? —-On what law of nature can the fell tyrant found his right of enſlaving ſo many millions of wretches? I cannot but bluſh for my fellow-beings,——-I can ſcarcely rank them among my own ſpecies;—who that has but one grain of a genuine, patriotic ſpirit, does not wiſh to diſpoſſeſs the oppreſſor of his imperial dignity, and bring him down from his lofty throne?——Is it poſſible to endure or ſubmit to ſuch a ſoul-debaſing load?——is it poſſible that men who are created in the ſame upright

right form—that beings created with the ſame powers and the ſame faculties with thoſe of the tyrant,—which enſlaves them,———ſhould be ſervile enough to bend down to the earth, even beneath the beaſts?—To ſubmit to ſuch a tyranny,—to ſuch an abject ſlavery,——argues the very height of deſpotiſm and the very extreme of degeneracy.——How could I curſe—but what are curſes?——they cannot kill, otherwiſe I would in one breath ſend a dagger to the heart of every tyrant who dared to encroach on that glorious freedom which nature has beſtowed upon us, or made advances to introduce into the world whatever had a tendency to ſlavery.

Such

Such is the ſtate of what is commonly called the great world;——and ſuch nearly may we conſider the ſtate of the little world, or the condition and happineſs of man in himſelf, according as the different powers and faculties of his ſoul predominate.—— Content and tranquility muſt be the portion of that mind, where the ſeveral paſſions are duly regulated and in harmony and uniſon with each other;——but diſorder and confuſion muſt neceſſarily enſue from every undue ſtretch of any one faculty.—— In the one, we are preſented with all the bleſſings and pleaſures of a well-ordered and duly-regulated government,—and clearly perceive the advantages reſulting from a monarchy which is limited in its operations and reſtrained

reſtrained by proper and wholeſome laws;—in the other, the tyranny and oppreſſion of arbitrary power are obvious,—and the tumult and diſorder occaſioned in the ſoul, the ſtrongeſt indications of the confuſion and perplexity of being ſubject to the mere will and caprice of an individual.—Adieu, my dear Friend,

Your's as ever,

G. VILLARS.

LETTER XIII.

COLONEL BELLMOUR *to* GEORGE VILLARS, *Esq.*

My dear Friend,

HOW cordially do I join with you in your exclamations againſt tyranny!——how ſtrongly do I feel myſelf affected with abhorrence and deteſtation at thoſe who thus lord it over their fellow-creatures!——I would ſupport your moſt ſtrenuous efforts to pull down the hydra from her ſtately throne, and humble her in

in the duſt;—I would plunge a dagger into the heart of any tyrant who ſhould dare to violate the ſacred bonds of juſtice, or preſume to act in a wanton and capricious manner to the detriment of his ſubjects or vaſſals. —I feel myſelf animated with a more than common indignation at the arbitrary decrees.——Deſpotiſm,—thou fatal and deſtructive engine of every bleſſing which mortals can enjoy!——where thou reigneſt, a curtain is drawn over the fair and pleaſant face of heaven, and all the comforts and enjoyments of life are obſcured and darkened.——How happy may we conſider even the ſavages of the foreſt, to thoſe falſely-bred and civilized nations where deſpotiſm holds her ſovereign empire?—There we may

behold nature in her free and uncontrouled ſtate;——there the ſoul is at liberty to act in a manner unreſtrained and capable of exerting herſelf in actions of the moſt exalted nature.—How happy is the ſtate even of the civilized infidel nations to ſuch a condition!—how infinitely preferable ſuch barbariſm to ſuch ſociety!——Where deſpotiſm holds the ſlaviſh rod, even the name of friendſhip is unknown;—here every one lives but for himſelf,——all is ſelfiſh, contracted, and ſpiritleſs. The feelings of perſons, under ſuch circumſtances and conditions, are wholly abſorbed and centred in themſelves;—though that mind can ſcarcely be ſuppoſed to feel, which is deprived of the very means of entertaining notions conſiſtent with

reaſon

reaſon and equity,—which knows not a wiſh or care for others.

The heart of man is perhaps, ſimply conſidered, much more noble and generous than is commonly conceived; —and 'tis only by attending to the various ſcenes which preſent themſelves on the great theatre of life, in the pure and genuine ſtate of nature, that we can form true and proper notions of it.—It is only where nature is ſuffered to reign, that we can juſtly reaſon upon its properties and excellencies.——I ſhall here preſent you with an inſtance of generous view, or rather, ſhall I ſay, of generous forgiveneſs, in a ſtory which was related to me by an Indian whom I met with in the northern parts of America.—

—He had been an officer in the French Army during the preceding war, and was in the ſervice at the defeat of Louiſburgh.——He received an inſult from his Colonel of ſuch a nature in open camp, which he could not ſubmit to;—but as he would not reſent this conduct, however mortifying, of his ſuperior officer, he had no other alternative than deſertion.—It was impoſſible for him to think of returning to his native country, to his friends and relatives;—the ſtain of cowardice was not to be endured,—his reputation was infringed upon,—his honor was affected.——To forget and forgive,* however

* It is god-like to forgive injuries which are done to us by our enemies,—it is, if poſſible, ſtill more ſo to do it to thoſe we

however it may have been conſidered as a moral maxim, though moſt frequently miſunderſtoood,—was a taſk to which his pride would not ſuffer him to incline.——He had been acquainted with the Hurons during his long reſidence in Canada;—he knew ſomething of their manners, and had learned a little of their language,—and determined to ſeek for protection from an enemy, of whom he had entertained the moſt favorable ſentiments, or glorioufly and undauntedly to fall by their hands.——Life was no longer ſupportable in his

we receive from deceitful and treacherous friends;——but to forget ſo as never to think more of them, is neither a duty required of us, nor is it at all times in our power to comply with it. Editor.

preſent condition;——ſo that, having formed this reſolution, he ſtole away from his camp at the cloſe of evening, and before day light appeared had reached a tent of the Indians, which was ſeated on the top of a hill in the moſt commanding ſituation, and the moſt convenient to avoid ſurprize.—He put together as many words of their language as he could poſſibly do, and having made known his ſtory, and declared his intention of being like themſelves both in religion and manners,——the chief communicated his deſire to his ſubjects, and they inſtantly embraced him with the warmeſt expreſſions of the moſt cordial friendſhip.——He was doubly welcome to them, by wearing his regimentals, and thereby convincing

vincing them that he was a warrior, —but it was neceſſary for his ſafety and ſecurity that he ſhould change his apparel, as he could not long remain unknown in his preſent garb; they inſiſted upon loving him as a brother, and as ſuch he muſt unavoidably appear like them. He ſet himſelf to a taſk which was now become neceſſary, doubly ſo, as on that depended not only his exiſtence in life, but his comfort and ſatisfaction. He gradually endeavoured to overcome the difficulty.

In this ſituation he continued for ſome time, habituating himſelf as faſt as poſſible to the manners of the Indians, as he had before conformed to their dreſs.—He had not effectually accompliſhed his deſign, when he one

morning joined in their hunt, to learn their method of catching the wild boar; ——but not having been ſufficiently acquainted with their manœuvres in hunting through the foreſt, which they do with much eaſe and rapidity, he was left alone at a conſiderable diſtance behind them.——He looked around, with an anxiety not to be expreſſed for ſome eaſier way to the tent,—when, ſtagnated with aſtoniſhment, he beheld almoſt at his ſide the very colonel who had obliged him to renounce his friends and his country. —Being attended by a party of ſoldiers which had come thither in purſuit of him and was now on the point of overtaking him—the only reſource was that of the warwhoop, which he had learned, and which they always uſe when

when in danger,—on this, a party of Indians ruſhed from the mountains with incredible fury and reſolution, and quickly ſurrounded the colonel and his party.——They immediately bound them faſt to a tree,—and, before our new Indian could even gueſs at their purpoſe and intention, the dreadful ſcalping knives were produced, to ſatiate their vengence on the unfortunate captives.—Each of them had his victim aſſigned, and every thing was in readineſs for the dreadful ſacrifice.——The generous Frenchman was almoſt petrified with aſtoniſhment and ſurprize; he ſtood ſpeechleſs, and deprived of motion——The chief directed his eyes upon his new friend, as gliſtening with pleaſure to find himſelf in a capacity to revenge his foe.

—But how ſurprized was he to behold a look of ſorrow and concern, rather than that of ſatisfaction.--His pride was diſarmed,—the ſenſe of his ignominy was now forgot.——Though he had deprived him of every pleaſure, and had driven him from his friends and from his country to take ſhelter among ſavages;—yet the force of cuſtom and education was too predominant to feel any happineſs at the meditated maſſacre.—He felt that they were his countrymen,—and ſaw them as it were at the point of death, and their laſt breath quivering as if ready to take its final departure.—Though torn from every thing that was valuable, and driven from every hope and comfort of life,—yet his generous ſoul was overwhelmed with pity, and reflection's ſacred

power

power was ſtruck with the inhuman ſacrifice.—But when revenge is worked up in the breaſt of an Indian, he had ſeen enough to be fully convinced that it ſeldom leaves it till the blood of the unhappy captive has ſatiated and glutted their impetuous rage.—It was only by ſtratagem, therefore, that he could hope to effect what he had meditated for their reſcue;—the chief was waiting his look to complete the work of death, and with extreme ſurprize beheld his looks of ſadneſs.—Upon enquiring the cauſe, the generous Frenchman made him this reply.—"I "was ſtudying," ſaid he, "how I could "increaſe the honor of our tribe, of "which it is my great glory to be one, "and ſhall ever remain ſo.—I have "found in your country that friend-

"ſhip

" ſhip, which would have been de-
" nied in my own;——if therefore,
" by a noble and generous effort of
" compaſſion, we ſhould releaſe and re-
" ſtore to liberty the trembling victims,
" —how ſuperior would the god of
" India appear to that of their boaſt-
" ed ſuperior religion! "—He ceaſed, and feared the reply,—when to his great aſtoniſhment, the chief fell upon his neck, and embraced him with an ardor inexpreſſible;--he called him more than brother,—and though he before loved and eſteemed him, now he would die for him, and would even forfeit his own life for his ſafety.—Then, with an agility ſcarce ever before ſeen, he flew to his companions, and quickly releaſed the almoſt expiring wretches from their dreadful captivity, and re-

ſtored

ſtored them to life and liberty.—Thus, by one generous effort of an injured friend, were theſe unhappy victims recalled to enjoy the bleſſings of happineſs.

How noble, my friend, is this proceeding!—what an illuſtrious diſplay of greatneſs do we diſcover in theſe wild children of nature!——what an inſtance of friendſhip, of ſympathy, is here diſplayed!——But take a ſurvey over the countries where deſpotiſm ſways the ſceptre, and the caprice of the monarch gives law to the ſubject,—what is man under theſe circumſtances, better than a moving machine;——he is deprived of all thoſe fine ſenſations of the ſoul, which conſtitute the pleaſure and the enjoyment of life

life;—thoſe noble faculties with which nature has endowed him, which ſhould advance him to the moſt ſublime and exalted pitch of grandeur,—are ever loſt under the bigotry of party, and the rod of tyranny.—I hope ſoon to ſee you here, till which time I am as ever,

Your's &c,

BELLMOUR.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

GEORGE VILLARS; *Esq to* COLONEL BELLMOUR.

I AM delighted beyond expreſſion with your wild children of nature as you call them,——nor am I leſs gratified with the character and conduct of your generous Frenchman.—How noble is the work of nature, when at liberty to act in her free ſtate, without interruption or controul from arbitrary tyranny,—without

out bias or prejudice from projected ſyſtems and imaginary ſpeculations!—How full of virtue is the ſoul!--even the moſt uncivilized have ſtill that noble intrepidity of ſoul,—-which, as you juſtly obſerve, is a ſtranger to thoſe countries where deſpotiſm governs.—How many,—how numerous are the inſtances which the hiſtory of our own country affords us, where thoſe wild children of nature, (to uſe your own expreſſion,) naked and unarmed, withſtood the power of well-appointed armies, and bravely oppoſed the conqueror of the world!—Spirit of liberty,—thou faireſt patroneſs of our iſle,—may the great and infinite preſerver of men ever ſhed around his friendly beams, and ſtill protect thy ever favored land!—I very ſoon hope for the

pleaſure

pleaſure of ſeeing my happy friend, till which time and for ever my ſoul wiſhes you every increaſe of happineſs, and be aſſured that none is more wholly your's than is,

my dear friend,

Your's ever,

G. VILLARS.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

COLONEL BELLMOUR *to* GEORGE VILLARS *Esq*;

WHY, George,—why did you close your letter with such an earnest ejaculation?—why should you think such a reflection necessary?—Increase of happiness!—what,—do you think that I feel already the torment of matrimony?——that the honey-moon of felicity is already in its wane?—that my bliss is already become

become leſs ſenſible?—Why, George, this pungent, this keen remark?—why ſhould you entertain an idea that my happineſs ſo ſoon decreaſes,—or how could you imagine that my heart can be in a ſtate of torture?

Fatal idea!—cruel imagination!—Has Miſs Colville wrote to you?—But whither does my diſtraction drive me?—She knows you not,—yet,—but why ſhould you think of me, my friend?——let that conſideration be conſigned to the ſhades of oblivion and tranſported to the land of darkneſs.—Be it ſo—all is paſt—that is enough to check all diſagreeable compariſons—and I wiſh for—I know not what I wiſh for—but man has the

ſeeds

ſeeds of anguiſh ſown in his heart, —and in this luxuriant ſoil, how quickly do they vegetate?—In ſpite of the cultivating hand which points out the way to happineſs,—in defiance of every exertion which we can make, the weeds of diſſatisfaction will ſpring up in that empty void which giddy, diſcontented man is always making in his heart.

Yet I will take courage, and act like myſelf.—Enquire therefore no further into my heart, nor more contribute to my infelicity;—'tis now at peace—all huſh'd and calm—all, all is happineſs.

I cannot but wonder at what I have wrote, yet ſmile at it;—and therefore ſend it you, juſt as it is, that you may do

do the ſame.—I hope you are well and happy, and am

Your ever faithful friend

BELLMOUR.

P. S. This youth here—this Charles—I wiſh I knew more about him, and yet I cannot prevail with myſelf to enquire.—They ſay he is the ſon of a brother of Maria's father, who died on his paſſage to the Eaſt Indies.—He hoped to have gained a fortune for this his ſon, but the little portion he poſſeſſed

poſſeſſed was by this untoward ſtroke moſtly loſt, and the youth left entirely to the bounty of his ſurviving friends,—thoſe friends who remained to commiſerate his caſe.—But he is a moſt amiable youth, nevertheleſs;—only I think they make too much of him here.—He was at College when I left England—now he is returned from thence, with the advantage of what few attain in thoſe ſeminaries—the moſt cultivated underſtanding with the moſt endearing politeneſs.——His accompliſhments, it muſt be allowed, are almoſt beyond his years;—they almoſt exceed the bounds of probability.—But why ſuch attention?—he is but an orphan.——It is true that Maria has a heart of extreme ſenſibility,—a heart which is diſpoſed to feel ſo

every

every one.—Even the word alone of ſorrrow or affliction will bring the bright tear into her lovely eye, and make thoſe ſhining luminaries to ſtart with the pearly drops.—But be ſilent doubt!—ſleep,—ſleep,—ſuſpicion in thy hell-form'd cove!———may the fiend that firſt gave birth to thee be ever far, very far from the dwellings of Bellmour!

LETTER XVI.

GEORGE VILLARS *Esq*; *to* COLONEL BELLMOUR.

ASTONISHMENT has almoſt deprived me of the power of anſwering your letter.——When, ſaid I to myſelf, could my friend loſe his generous, noble, heart,—and ſuffer that baſe, that ignoble ſpirit to uſurp its place, which dictated that deteſtable epiſtle?—"He is but an orphan."—Gracious heaven—can this be

be the language of Bellmour?—what!——his amiable wife——the beloved Maria already leſſened in his eſteem!—Is it poſſible?—can the heart of man be thus unſtable? —thus wavering and inconſtant?—can the poſſeſſor of all thoſe virtues which ſo much adorn humanity, be ſo unſatisfied?—How great the treaſure you enjoy, without feeling the true reliſh, or being ſenſible of the perfection of it!

But, oh! my Bellmour,—reflect, I conjure and intreat you, on the happineſs you are about to diſcard and abandon,——conſider what a treaſure you are going to throw away forever——reflect on the conſequences, ere fell ſuſpicion and corroding doubt prey upon the vitals, and ere the poiſoned

arrow has been fixed in your heart, think how irrecoverable the wound. —Yet I would gladly bring myself to hope,—nay, I think I have entirely miſtaken the meaning and expreſſion of my friend's letter;—poſſeſſed of ſuch a woman, ſo lovely, ſo tender and affectionate, and bleſſed with a heart ſo full of every virtue, and ſo tranſcendently ſurpaſſing in every grace and accompliſhment.—oh, my friend, let me again conjure you to throw off every mean ſuſpicion, every thought injurious to happineſs, to virtue, to yourſelf,—to Maria.

——,

I will ſee you to morrow—then, my friend, will I preſume upon the advantage of friendſhip, and the flattering encouragement which that affords

fords me, to replace happineſs in that heart, it is without cauſe, ſo nearly on the point of forſaking Till then, adieu,

my dear friend,

G. VILLARS.

LETTER XVII.

Mrs. BELLMOUR *to Miſs* COLVILLE.

My dear Louiſa,

I Can ſcarcely tell whether your firſt determination of never giving up your peace and liberty to man, is not, after all, the wiſeſt reſolution.—Oh! my friend, what does not a woman venture upon when ſhe relinquiſhes for ever her future happineſs on earth, and ſubmits her felicity to the power of one being, and that being.—Yet do not, my Louiſa, imagine that I am now writing

writing from my heart, though it is what I generally do. I now write from my reaſon,—from my reflections which ariſe on the ſtate of that woman, of whatever rank or condition in life, who has made him the guardian of her fate, and too late is convinced that this fate is miſery;——miſery, from whence there is no retreat,—and agony and deſpair are placed as centinels at each avenue, to keep fair hope away.——How often muſt the woman who is thus wretched and unhappy regret the moment in which ſhe permitted love to blind her reaſon,——in which ſhe ſo eagerly ſought her chains.—I beg, my friend, you will not from hence think that I have done any thing I ſhall ever have occaſion to repent of;—do not

imagine that I am incapable of writing in the ſtyle of ſentiment, or that I may not ſome times ſtep aſide for variety, and depart from unintereſting and minute details of facts.——But I think that all which the heavieſt grief could bring upon me,—all that affliction's hand could pour,—would never have that effect on my temper and diſpoſition to rank me among the number of ſuch plaintive mourners.—No, my Louiſa, though my heart might ſink perhaps under its ſenſibility, and be depreſſed by the conſideration of ſo unfortunate a change,—it ſhould never deſcend to complain.——But of this my friend may be aſſured, that I would not change my ſituation for any other under the wide canopy of heaven.—

Yet

Yet theſe men, my Louiſa,——but perhaps it is the charter of their ſex to bring us, weak veſſels, into ſlavery; ——and in thoſe civilized countries where they cannot enſlave the bodies, —where forbidding tyranny and ill-omen'd jealouſy are leſs predominant, —the feelings are too frequently ſacrificed as victims to their power.—Though I write to you, my dear Louiſa, I could almoſt wiſh you not to know my meaning;—but I cannot deſiſt, even if I was certain you would not underſtand me.—Yet, my ſweet friend, it muſt be allowed that Col. Bellmour is a man in every reſpect ſo compleatly formed to make a woman happy,—that if he ſhould fail, I think it might be aſſerted, that all others muſt miſcarry in their attempts.

—But can you believe it,—that he,—this moſt accompliſhed of mankind,—this unparallel'd model of all that is perfect in man, or deſirable by woman,——that he, my Louiſa, ſhould be placed among the number of human beings of frailty?—Yet, let me hope that I am miſtaken, and that this is the effect of my own fancy and imagination.—I have been accuſtomed, not to obey any will but my own;—and not inured to pay that deference to the judgment and ſuperior underſtanding of man——(though it muſt be allowed that his faculties have been cultivated in the higheſt degree,)—perhaps I may expect too much complaiſance from him!——perhaps like other fooliſh girls, expecting that the lover ſhould ſurvive the huſband, I

may

may be led to fancy change where there is none.—I hope it is ſo, and yet I do not know how, it ſeems extremely odd, and my mind ſeems preſſed with a load, of which it cannot unburden itſelf.—My conſcious heart, though it recoils at the idea of attempting to deceive itſelf,—ſeems agitated and reſtleſs;—and the big tear ſwells from the eye, by a ſecret but irreſiſtible ſympathy.—Sometimes he ſtarts, as if alarmed by ſome ſudden thought,——then looks at me with an eagerneſs I cannot account for,—and I fancy that I ſee a coldneſs in his aſpect, accompanied with an eagerneſs which ſeems to betray his labouring under ſome ſecret agony.—But you know, my Louiſa, I am not much read in the book of life,

and perhaps I may be deceived;—I hope,—I truſt that I ſhall find it ſo,—and therefore, my lov'd friend, make no mention of what I have hinted to you, but let it die in its birth.—But I feel—I am convinced that a ſecret will be preſerved as ſafely and ſecurely in your boſom as in my own.—Poor Charles!—I wiſh I could ſpeak to Col. Bellmour about him.—I think I may now, my Louiſa, without breaking my vow of ſecreſy, reveal the ſtory with which my mind is ſo much overwhelmed,—could I find him in an hour of ſerenity, diſengaged from the depth of thought which ſeems to involve him;—perhaps he expects it,—and that expectation may be the cauſe of his unſettled ſtate of mind.—But

why

why ſhould I dwell upon this diſagreeable reflection?—may not ſomething in the conduct of his officers affect him, which at preſent may be in a ſituation too perplexing to admit of explanation?—perhaps they may —I will indulge the thought.—Adieu, Louiſa, and lock up ſafe in your boſom for ever the reflections of your friend,

MARIA BELLMOUR.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

Miſs COLVILLE *to Mrs.* BELLMOUR.

THERE now—I thought how it would be.—Did I not tell you I was always in the right?—And ſo, the pretty babies have already frowned upon one another.—This, to be ſure is a moſt dreadful affair.—What! and he does not now kneel at your feet, and in plaintive ejaculations implore you to take pity on his diſtreſſed condition!—He can now

ſit

ſit, I ſuppoſe, in a chair at your ſide —and perhaps too the poor man can eat and drink like a rational being and as he ought to do, inſtead of ſitting ſtill and motionleſs to watch thoſe ſacred watch-lights of his ſoul —your radiant eyes.—Oh! fie,— fooliſh girl!——I thought you had been poſſeſſed of more ſenſe than to look for ſomething to make you unhappy;—poor creature!—and ſo becauſe you could not find it, you muſt frown.—I proteſt I ſhall begin to be aſhamed of you,—and you will compel me, whether I will or not, to marry myſelf to ſet you an example.—Fie upon you—a man and woman of ſenſe, not to know better! two, ſo formed to make and to be made happy, and ſo completely capable

pable of making each other ſo, to throw away by folly that loveliest and moſt ſacred gift of heaven—the heart's dear peace—I proteſt I ſhall ſteal one day from my dear mother's ſide to come down and ſcold you both—ſo till I ſee you, learn to be very good,—when I come, I ſhall endeavour to make you both better.

Adieu;

Your's

LOUISA COLVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XVIX.

GEORGE VILLARS; *Eſq to* COLONEL BELLMOUR.

My dear Friend,

YOU cannot imagine the pain it has coſt my heart to be obliged to leave Moreton Abbey ſo ſoon.——Little did I think what a ſacrifice I ſhould have been forced to make to my intereſt at the expence of my affections.————Since the death of my brother, my affairs have been in ſo very unſettled a ſituation,

that

that I can hardly call a moment my own.—But, my friend, to convince you that your happineſs very nearly concerns me,——allow me to call your attention to the ſubject about which we have ſo often converſed;—let that advice I have deſired to give in your ear be extended to my letters.——Permit me, Bellmour, from the long friendſhip which has ſubſiſted between us,—to attempt reconciling your reaſon and your happineſs, which divided pierce and rend the ſoul, but when united form the true and ſole happineſs of life;—when theſe are once at war in your boſom,——then is the umpire, peace; which ſerved to cement and conſolidate them, ready to take her flight and vaniſh for ever.——But let

me

me conjure you, my friend, ere ſhe takes her laſt ſtep and is entirely expelled from your breaſt, to conſider her importance;—let me intreat you to reflect on her worth, ere by her deſerting and abandoning it for ever, it become a deſert of miſery and ſorrow.—Think, oh! think while it is yet in your power, and the remedy is within your reach,—think what in life muſt be the ſituation of one who drives that faireſt tenant from the boſom, and conſigns her habitation to diſtruſt and pain.—The mind is its own carver, aud within itſelf commands power ſufficient to make a heaven of hell,—or a hell of heaven.

How happy a thing would it be, could theſe words be impreſſed in characters

characters indelible on the hearts of every inhabitant of earth.—How would it inſpire them with a ſenſe of their own importance in the ſcale of creation,—and inform them how much in their own power is that happineſs which ſo many throw heedleſsly away every hour of their lives.——Know yourſelf, Bellmour,—and rouſe from that melancholy into which you are ſuffering yourſelf to ſlide with rapid progreſs.—I would give every atom of my fortune,—I would ſacrifice every hope of my life, could I open a paſſage for one ray of light into the heart of my friend,—could I drive from her ſtation that dark inhabitant which ſurrounds and eclipſes the radiant eye of reaſon.——What are all the wants and neceſſities,—what is

every

every convenience or even the affluence of life, compared to the loſs or the poſſeſſion of that inward peace, which, once alienated from the heart, is ſeldom if ever recalled?—are they not like warring powers, which, tho' peace ſhould have happily reſtored the olive-branch,—yet ſuſpicion and fear keep each upon their guard againſt all poſſibility of ſurprize, and baniſh that ſerenity which ought to be the ſoul and cement of friendſhip.—Pardon me, my friend,——the language of advice does not always come from the heart;—the pleaſure of oppoſing our opinion to that of others, I am convinced very frequently occaſions it,—and friendſhip has but too often the ſmalleſt ſhare in the motive for offering it.—But you will believe

believe me when I aſſure you, that this is not my caſe at preſent,—but that I ſincerely wiſh to ſee you happy, and would forego every thing to make that wiſh reality.—I am by no means qualified to aſſume the office of monitor;——that is a taſk which I am deſirous of leaving to others,—ſince it is too frequently that the very fault we would correct in thoſe we call our friends, we have need to be amended ourſelves.—On this account, allow me to repeat it that I deteſt the idea;—independent of any one, we ſhould be maſters of our own thoughts,——we ſhould be able to govern our own hearts.—It is true that we boaſt of our freedom, and vaunt ourſelves under the idea of liberty,——but how often do we ſa-

crifice

crifice to the opinion of others that moſt valuable bleſſing which heaven has beſtowed upon us,—the freedom of the heart.——Too frequently are we preſented with inſtances of this conduct;——and cuſtom and caprice generally ſway the affections of mankind.—But let me hope that I do not deceive myſelf in pretending to an exception.——No——my friend——I do not deceive myſelf.——For the happineſs of my friend I feel that I could ſacrifice my own;——the feelings of my heart would more than repay the anguiſh, and the victim would rejoice under the ſtroke.——But this is not all,——to ſee ſuch an angel of a woman, ſinking hourly under a load of agony and oppreſſion, unconſcious of a fault,——unconſcious of any crime

but

but that of ſeeing you afflicted and unhappy, which the more you endeavour to ſtifle and conceal, the more perceptible it becomes;—do, my friend, throw off an enemy which you ſo little know how to encounter with. ——Surely the ſoul of Bellmour was not made for love,——as diſtruſt I would hope, is a ſtrange to his nature; —otherwiſe, how is it poſſible not to love to diſtraction ſuch an amiable creature.—If among all the forms of humanity, there is a being of purity and perfection,—it muſt be Mrs. Bellmour;——every thing which heaven could give in a woman is centered in her,—-lovely,——unaffected,—-bleſſed with a ſoul which ſpeaks its every meaning in her eye,—and can ſhe—but let that moment be out of the

records

records of all time, which would join falſhood and Mrs. Bellmour.——Oh! Bellmour,——do not, with ſo much happineſs in poſſeſſion,—do not, with ſuch a treaſure,——with the beſt gift which heaven could beſtow, make a hell in your own boſom.—Believe me when I ſay you are happy——believe me,—and be ſo.

Adieu,

G. VILLARS.

LETTER XX.

COLONEL BELLMOUR *to* GEORGE VILLARS *Eſq*;

Oh my dear Friend,

HOW much am I obliged to you for your laſt kind, pathetic epiſtle.—I will—I do believe that I am,—that I ought to be happy.—I ſhudder at the terror which your friendly admonitions have raiſed in my ſoul,—I look with horror down a precipice, from whoſe deep declivity I am yet ſcarcely eſcaped, and my trembling

trembling feet will hardly ſerve to bear me from the brink to which I had ſo rapidly haſtened.—I ſtruggle to get looſe from this dark foe of my peace,—but he ſtill,—ſtill graſps me with agonizing pangs, and rends and tears my affected heart almoſt to diſtraction.—Oh, Villars;—Oh, my friend!—ſecure me from madneſs —ſecure me from myſelf—ſhelter me from the ſtorm which was ſo thickly gathering round me, and remove the veil which hinders me from diſcovering the danger into which I was ſo rapidly plunging.—But it is done;—my friend has already performed the kind,——the neceſſary office;——my ſenſes are already in ſome reſpect reſtored to their primitive ſtate, and my dawning recovery beats in ſym-

pathy to the conſolation adminiſtered by his helping hand,——How do I repent of ſo unſeaſonable, ſo unwarrantable a procedure;——How regret that moment of agony which that ſoul of excellence ſuſtained from my fooliſh and deteſtable behaviour!——Oh! my dear friend,—ſhe is every thing that you have repreſented her,——ſhe is poſſeſſed of every good,——and I will honor the ſacred gift which heaven has beſtowed upon me.—I look into her ſoul,—and what is the conſequence?—How ſhould I bluſh for my own unreaſonable conduct, to ſee there,—not one thing which ought to give me the leaſt uneaſineſs,——but I there behold every thing my heart could wiſh for, all harmleſs as ſleeping infancy.—I wiſh—I

pray

pray,——I ſet myſelf with eagerneſs to bend my ſtubborn heart to heaven, to beg its mercy for the guilt which hangs ſo heavy upon me,—and its prayer is heard,

Sweet peace comes ſmiling on a cherub's wing.

For this I nightly pray, and the horror with which my ſoul was overwhelmed now begins to diſperſe and vaniſh.——I once more begin to feel what I am,—and therefore feel that I am,——that I will be a man.——I will; hourly importune that ſeat of mercy, which alone can afford me conſolation in my diſtreſs,——I will enjoy the bleſſings of heaven—I will be happy.—Oh, my Villars!—how

happy do I feel myſelf in this determination!—my mind is huſh'd and calm,—my heart is tranquil, and my ſoul at peace.—Ten thouſand thanks for your friendly remonſtrance, and believe me ever attentive to your affectionate and ſalutary advice,

Your ever obliged friend,

BELLMOUR

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

GEORGE VILLARS *Esq*; *to* COLONEL BELLMOUR.

My dear Friend,

YOU will believe me when I aſſure you that a meſſenger from heaven with the inſignia of peace and the aſſurance of eternal happineſs at the cloſing hour of life, —could not have given more reſt and joy to my heart than thoſe laſt lines of yours.—May the ſame ſentiments guide you,—the ſame reſo-

ſutions direct you, through every period of time!—may every future hour of your exiſtence here ſerve to confirm you in thoſe pleaſing reflections,—and may the good ſpirit which dictated thoſe ſentiments,—through whatever means it has been accompliſhed, ſtill direct you to produce the pleaſing fruits in the actions of your life!—If a few of our actions ſhould be wrong,—and where is that ſpotleſs being, whoſe deportment is not in ſome reſpects erroneous?—— our miſtakes once diſcovered,—what ſhould hinder the pleaſures ariſing from repentance and an *acknowledgement

* The cirumſtances here alluded to are perfectly conſiſtent with ſuch an acknowledgement

ledgement of our crimes,—what ſhould hinder that the pains of the one ſhould not be ſucceeded by the pleaſures of the other?—And what greater pleaſure can a mortal enjoy,—what more exquiſite ſatisfaction can he feel than what ariſes from the conviction,—that though he was once wrong, at laſt

ledgement. Perhaps if too generally conſidered, ſuch an acknowledgement, taken as an eſſential property of repentance, might be productive of evils greater than thoſe it meant to remove. To be conſcious of crimes and to acknowledge them before the throne of the ſupreme being, muſt be neceſſary to our peace and happineſs of mind,—but in common life we muſt be directed by the occaſion and probable effects which ſuch acknowledgement would have on thoſe to whom it is made. Editor.

he knows that he is right.—Let this conviction, my friend, take a firm footing in your heart,—let it be ſecurely rooted ſo as to prevent every fear or danger of a relapſe;—and in the conſideration of your own weakneſs, let your mind be impreſſed with ſuch thoughts as may give you additional ſtrength and fortitude.—For man, alas!—how weak a being is he, yet how ſtrong!—he is capable of every high poſt, and equal to almoſt any difficulty,—but yet how often is he ſtopped in the career of his purſuits, and checked in his progreſs by a ſtraw or a feather.

Adieu, Bellmour,——make yourſelf happy,—and ſoothe your Maria into a forgetfulneſs of ſorrow.—Let her think

that

that it came alone from ſome offence in life, which it is unneceſſary for her ſoftneſs to be troubled with the knowledge of.—Believe me ever,

my dear friend,

Your's

G. VILLARS.

LETTER XXII.

Miſs COLVILLE *to Mrs.* BELLMOUR.

My dear Maria,

MY ſoul is full—even to agony with your diſtreſs.—If a heart like yours was made to feel for one week the hand of affliction,—the next I am certain would ſee you in the grave.—You *promiſed to forgive the light

* The promiſe which our fair writer made to her friend of viſiting her immediately after her laſt letter, ſeems to have been fulfilled.

light manner in which I treated your diſtreſs;—I preſume upon the promiſe and know that you forgive me,—I am ſure you do.—But, my ſweet friend, let me intreat and preſs you to forget the cauſe which made you write ſuch; —as I really think that the momentary gloom is vaniſhed,—tho' Heaven knows from whence it came,—I muſt beg you will forget it.—I hope—but ſurely tis impoſſible—yet I hope,

filled accordingly. The promiſe here alluded to muſt doubtleſs have been made during the time of her viſit to Mrs. Bellmour; —and the indulgent readers will forgive the Author for ſuppoſing them ready to ſupply the omiſſion of what paſſed on this occaſion betwixt theſe two friends, from their own imaginations. Editor.

my

my Maria, Charles is not the cauſe, though I cannot tell how it is that I am ſomewhat inclined to fear it.—But Bellmour's heart is not of that mould which can refuſe a morſel to the helpleſs;——he is incapable of thinking the dear youth an intruder in his houſe,—and, from any other cauſe, it muſt be impoſſible.—Be ſilent, my heart,——and let my thoughts remain untold;——tho', my Maria, I think you had better break thro' a vow made to the dying, than involve the living in diſtreſs.—You have promiſed me that you would, and I muſt preſs you to fulfil that promiſe, for your own ſake,—for the ſake of the dear youth,—for the ſake of your Bellmour —and I aſſure you that I ſhall expect you will communicate the ſame to your

your auguſt lord and maſter as ſoon as poſſible.—Do forgive me, my friend, if I am ſtill inclined to run on in my fooliſh way;—my dear Maria knows my heart,—knows that tho' nobody laughs oftner, nobody has a tear more ready to diſtreſs, or more capable of feeling for the ſorrows of a friend.—That ſhe may never have cauſe to feel for you is the riſing, wiſhing, and cloſing prayer of her who is,

Your very affectionate friend,

LOUISA COLVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

Mrs. BELLMOUR *to Miſs* COLVILLE.

Friend of my Soul,

WITH you I will venture to break through that vow, which as you have ſo prevailingly convinced me, is become neceſſary.---I will entruſt you with the ſecrets of my heart.—I feel, with you, my Louiſa, that the momentary gloom, which has ſo lately interrupted our felicity, ſeems nearly vaniſhing;—I think that my Bellmour ſeems again to be the very being

being which my heart found him,—though I know not, my friend, how it is that this ſad preſentiment of languor and oppreſſion ſhould hang like a load on my heavy aching heart. I have wiſhed and endeavoured to tell him the tale of ſorrow which hangs around your Charles,—but have not ſufficiently recovered the confidence which ſhould invite to a repetition of the ſtory;—and that ſuggeſtion of yours has deprived my tongue of its office, when I find myſelf diſpoſed to begin the recital.—To you, then, my Louiſa,—to you my dear friend, ſhall the ſecret be revealed;—perhaps I may never, from that uncommon preſſure which I feel on my ſpirits,—perhaps I may never have it in my power to reveal it to any other.

Know

Know then, my Louiſa, that this Charles, this dear youth whom my heart loves as its own,—is the child of my ſiſter;—of a ſiſter formed with every grace of nature,—bleſſed with every virtue of heaven.——Oh! my friend, ſuch was the heart of that moſt amiable of women, that if an angel had taken its abode upon earth, ——in that heart it would have met with a ſuitable manſion,—but to that heart,—to that beauty,—to that virtue, ſhe fell a victim.—But before I proceed, it is neceſſary I ſhould remind you, though you very well know it, that my father was the laſt remains of a family, except my brother (now with him cold in aſhes) diſtinguiſhed in the annals of their country for virtue and for fame.—He, alas! fell himſelf

ſelf a martyr on the plains of war, in defence of his country's rights and liberties;—and the beloved and faithful partner of his ſoul ſunk inſtantly a victim to the grief ſhe was overwhelmed with.—But the approach of death ſpread a pleaſing calm around her,—-though ſometimes a pang for her children would tear its way through her placid heart, and darken the dawn, otherwiſe fair and ſerene, which roſe around her at the cloſe of death.—Life hung upon her as a heavy load of pain;—-often would ſhe invoke the power of mercy to grant her ſoul ſtrength to ſupport her ſorrow,——often would ſhe beſeech the fountain of power to be the protector of her orphan children, and as often would ſhe ſink beneath the load.—

At

.t length the wearied ſpirit bent its .vay, and ſought the manſions of its kindred ſaint.

To Mrs. Rivers, whoſe late loſs you know I ſo much regretted,—who had for many years been the houſe-keeper and companion of my ſiſter,—to her care, with her dying breath, my dear mother conſigned us;—entreating her, by every tie of friendſhip, to be the guardian of our youth,—and ſave us from the wrong paths of the world, while her life was yet breathing on her quivering lips,——that ſhe had ever loved us,——at laſt ſhe bathed us with her tears, and expired.

My Brother who was juſt come

of

of age, had, at the earneſt requeſt of his dying mother, reſigned a commiſſion he had been ſome ſhort time poſſeſſed of, to attend to the education of his orphan ſiſters;——we wanted his protection, as I was then no more than ten years of age and my ſiſter about ſixteen.

They remained at the caſtle a long time inconſolable.—They would often meet together o'er the tomb which held her venerable aſhes, and bathe it with the tears of unfeigned affliction;—the ſun which at its riſing would often behold them there,—would ſuffer its courſe over this our world to lengthen often, ere they could forſake it.

Al

All the relations uſed to frequent this melancholy place, where the remains of our departed parent were depoſited; —and where many others had long been buried in that cold houſe, where the great deſtroyer, death, aſſembles all the victims of his care, and leaves them mouldring while he ſeeks for more.

Oh! death, thou tyrant of this low ſuſpended world, whoſe cruel ſword, unpitied ſtrikes at all and murders joys great nature gives us here—— when will thy triumphs end, remorſeleſs king?—Still muſt the parent weep, the virgin mourn.—Still, till thy power with nature is no more. —Death—the keen anguiſh which ſtill he can haſten, makes ſhuddering

nature

nature tremble at his name.——On hearts unaccuſtomed and unuſed to misfortune, the darts of grief ſtrike hard and pierce deep,—but tho' they are exquiſitely painful, they are ſeldom laſting; they weep—they mourn, and are again themſelves;—but to thoſe who have often drunk of the bitter cup the murderer ſorrow ſtrikes with deeper force, and ſpreads a gloom o'er every ſweet in life.

They had paſt one twelvemonth at the caſtle, lamenting the loſs of ſo amiable a mother,———when the riſing morn of life gave the full form of a beauteous day.——All vaniſhed, the cloud of grief fled far, all ſmil'd around,—and the bright morning from the darkeſt night is bright as that hue

hue upon the precious ſtone, on which the lapidary has exerted his ſkill to give it the moſt poliſhed luſtre.

They now turned their thoughts upon viſiting the gay metropolis,—a deſire which ſo frequently leads the beings of this world to unhappineſs.—The deſire of knowing the world now poſſeſſed every ſtrength of their boſoms. While Fanny, for that was my ſiſter's name, was feeding on the hope,—they received an invitation from a relation of their deceaſed father, who from ſome trifling family pique, had not ſeen or carried on any correſpondence with each other for many years.—They had often heard their departed mother ſpeak of her in the higheſt terms of reſpect, and deeply regret

that

that falſe pride which could divide ſuch amiable friends;——on this account they were happy to accept it,——a ſhort viſit was reſolved upon, and every neceſſary preparation was made accordingly.—The good Mrs. Rivers, with a heart ſwelling with apprehenſions, heaved the ſigh of anguiſh and concern;——in vain did this guardian of their tender years remonſtrate,—in vain did ſhe plead her objections to the youth and inexperience of Miſs Moreton.—Mrs. Rivers was one of thoſe old faſhioned few, who bear through life the memory of their deceaſed friends. Every wiſh of her departed lady was conſidered with that veneration, which weary pilgrims from the ſacred land would regard the reliques of a martyr'd ſaint.

With an energy of faith and a warmth of honeſt zeal, which entirely affected her diſpoſition, ſhe urged the laſt requeſt of their now lifeleſs parent, when, with her dying breath, ſhe begged, ſhe intreated them to avoid the world;——its ſwains, ſhe'd cry, would ſearch around for beauty,—and women and virtue were the prey of libertines.——In vain it was that Mrs. Rivers preſſed to their conſideration the various ſeductions of innocence under every ſpecious maſk and form,—in vain did ſhe hold out to them the moſt ſtriking inſtances of ruined beauty, with which the world abounded.——She loved Miſs Moreton;——when a babe, ſhe had given her a name, of which her friends approved.—Often would ſhe recount

the

the harmleſs paſtimes of her youth, with a heart ſo highly delighted as fully expreſſed the faithfulneſs of her ſoul.——To this good woman, Miſs Moreton applied herſelf aſſiduouſly, nor did ſhe long ſue in vain;——her importunities prevailed over the arguments of her protectreſs, and ſhe at laſt gained from her a forced unwilling conſent.—But this kind guardian of her tender years would cry, the tears at the ſame time burſting from her eyes,—ſtill ſhe would cry, if any miſchance ſhould befal her, my peace and her happineſs would be loſt for ever.——Oh! my dear Mrs. Rivers, would the beauteous unſuſpecting maid reply——Oh! do not pain your heart with ſuch needleſs fear, nor torment yourſelf with the proſpect

of imaginary evils.—Are not we going to our aunt?—Is ſhe not known to be one of the moſt amiable,—one of the beſt of women?—She will be as careful of us as yourſelf;—beſides, my brother will be my guide, as Thomas will be his,—and the time of our ſeparation from each other will not be long.—This pleaſing garden and theſe verdant nelds, have charms which infinitely exceed any thing the town can beſtow;—our journey is only a temporary change, a momentary relaxation,—but I am determined to live and die here.—In this thoughtleſs manner did the beauteous and artleſs maid run on.

As ſhe was unconſcious of the badneſs of a world ſhe had now reſolved to

to enter upon, no wonder ſhe ſhould not perceive any danger;—the natural goodneſs and integrity of her heart ſeemed to whiſper her that there could be no cauſe to fear.—Heaven, ſhe would ſay, did not form human beings to live in dread of each other;—that divine philanthropy, which cements and binds the chequered world into one common ſociety, would not exiſt,—if all retired from the ſcenes of action. The world cannot be ſo bad as it has been repreſented to us;—the wicked are the people only who meet with misfortunes, and, I truſt, we ſhall never be amongſt the number.—Mrs. Rivers, poor good woman, could make no reply;——ſhe ſhook her head, and was ſilent,——as ſhe ſaw it would be in vain to preſs the

argument any farther.——She could have related many a tale of woe,—wherein the ſufferings of innocence and virtue, the deceits of the artful and inſinuating, and ſubtle policy of the world, or rather of many of the beings which inhabit it,—would have been clearly manifeſted. She could have told how weak the ſhield of purity and innocence would be found, when oppoſed to the hard and ruffian hand of vice,—and what a poiſoned ſting hung upon the ſoft ſoothing tongue of flattery.—All this —and more—much more could ſhe have told, had ſhe not found that it would have been fruitleſs.—Her looks indeed expreſſed it all;——but the ſmiling lips of Miſs Moreton, as if conſcious of what paſſed in the heart

of

of Mrs. Rivers, ſeemed to forbid her ſpeech,—and all objections were in vain.——They prepared for their departure,—-though the good Mrs. Rivers, with an anxiety which deprived her of reſt, ſtill breathed the leſſon of caution in her ears;—but we talk in vain of tempeſts to thoſe who know of nothing but calms. —They were going to a friend's,—the morning of their departure was fixed,—and with a prayer to proſperity on her lips, the good Mrs. Rivers led her to repoſe.

The rays of the morning had but juſt broke the miſt from the hills, and the face of nature wore the aſpect of ſerenity, when they were

ready for their departure to their aunt, and the coach was already at the door.———It was a view which would have induced a tyrant to looſe the ſhackles from his ſlave, to beſtow upon him that ſacred bleſſing of nature, the bliſs of freedom.—It was a ſcene which meliorated all the ſoul and gave to it joys beyond the reach of deſcription.———I was———but why ſhould I attempt the taſk of relating what I am ſo very unequal to?—They who delight in an early view of nature, and love to ſee her gradually expanding and opening to view, at the approach of the glorious orb of day;———thoſe who can take a pleaſure in treading the ſilent dewy ſhade, and find a ſatisfaction in hearing the muſic of the groves,

when

when firſt their ſweet muſicians tune their notes and morn's grey mantle ſhades the twilight vale;—thoſe muſt better know it than any weak attempts of mine can ſhew,—and to thoſe who are unaquainted with it, deſcription would fall far ſhort of its beauties, and it were profanation to defile it with any rude and unſkilful colouring.—For my part, I am free to own myſelf ſo far an enthuſiaſt of its beauties, that I think the human heart cannot feel a higher pleaſure, than the calm ſerenity which the riſing morn beſtows.—I have often wondered at that tranquility which appears in the azure canopy, when firſt that bright luminary appears above the horizon. I have ſat upon the dew-beſpangled lawn,———and

breathed out eulogiums to the graſs that grew around me.

The feelings of the heart are then far beyond the reach of ſublunary things; —it cannot then poſſeſs a thought which does not ſpring from the beſt of ſources,——from virtue and philanthropy.—I have (in thought) ſurveyed the ſleeping world around me, and given a prayer to the great and almighty arbiter of all things.—How tranquil is the ſcene!——how little looks ambition's ſwelling heart!—A view of nature in that ſtill hour, would even arreſt the conqueror's arm in the heart of his conqueſts. Even the miſer would feel his narrow heart expanded;——but the ſenſations of the

the feeling ones,——they are too exquiſite.——The firſt ſenſations are the moſt natural,—they are placed in the boſom, and flow ſpontaneous from the heart;——of courſe they demand a favorable attention, and require the moſt careful and ſteady examination.—But however this fine monitor of the fair one's ſentiments may incline —like the ſenſitive plant it will ſhrink from the rude touch of harſh expreſſion, and lie ſequeſtered there.—Yet theſe things, alas! enter only into the hearts of few, though capable of containing ſo many reflections!——the multitude and a variety of different beings, which almoſt, if not entirely ſurround them,—cannot but call forth the obſervation of perſons, and that obſervation generally

engroſſes all their faculties.—Hence it is that crouds ſhun thoſe more refined ſpeculations as a ſpecies of property of a texture far too refined for this world's wear.—But let us hail them as ſuitable companions to our tale, which the contracted and narrow-minded cannnot approach, and none but delicate minds are capable of taſting—and purſue our ſtory.

The morning was (as I have attempted to deſcribe it) fine—like a flatterer it lighted the path, and ſpread the way with flowers, which led to agony.--The good matron Mrs. Rivers, roſe firſt,——ſhe had not cloſed her eyes with ſleep;—all the night they had been lifted up in prayer for

Miſs

Miſs Moreton;—the tear ſtill ſhone in them, but ſhe wiped it off, and aſſumed a look of chearfulneſs, though her heart was filled with apprehenſions and diſquiet.——Miſs Moreton did not perceive this diſtreſs of her protectreſs,—the carriage was ready, and they flew to it with haſte.—Mrs. Rivers, as ſhe embraced her, to take a parting farewel, could not refrain ſhedding floods of tears;—ſhe even bathed her neck with them, and Fanny was moved extremely, ſo that her wonted gaiety entirely forſook her, and ſhe wept too.—Oh! my ſweet children, exclaimed the good Mrs. Rivers, may you return as happy as you go! The mutual farewel ceaſed, and they departed.

They

They journeyed ſome diſtance without any other intercourſe than books. The laſt words of Mrs. Rivers had raiſed ſentiments in the boſom of Fanny of a nature very adverſe to ſpeech. Formed with a ſenſibility of heart which is ever awake to pity,—the remembrance of her tears gave a pang which ached in her boſom, and ſhe would ſecretly ſay to herſelf, why did ſhe weep ſo?—her fears for our ſafety moved her good heart.—Dear woman!——we will ſoon return to bleſs you, and to repay the care and vigilance you have manifeſted for us. —This ſelf-ſatisfying thought dried up the laſt riſing tear;—ſhe wiped the trembling drop from her lovely eyes, —breathed the big ſigh which ſwelled her gentle heart,— and all was well.

Mr.

Mr. Moreton alſo had not been without his feelings.—He gave a ſigh as he ſaw his leſſening groves recede from ſight;—but now they had ceaſed from all ſides,—and a more pleaſing ſcene began to diſplay itſelf.—Even Thomas, who had been as much averſe to the journey as Mrs. Rivers, began to recover his wonted chearfulneſs,—and the hope of the pleaſures they had formed began to diffuſe ſmiles on the brow of every one.

They had now travelled a long way, when an accident which happened to one of the wheels of the carriage obliged them to alight.—It was in an obſcure part of the road, and very remote from any appearance of human abode.—

The

The whole journey indeed lay through very obſcure and unfrequented roads; —for it was a croſs country, which admitted not of much intercourſe.— While the men, therefore, returned to procure aſſiſtance to repair the miſfortune,—they wandered on, as chance directed them, till they entered unapprizedly a deep, gloomy foreſt, which looked venerable with age, the wild intermingling tops of whoſe trees ſhut out the beams of the meridian ſun,———of that ſun, which ſome centuries ago, had nouriſhed its roots.—The place was ſtill and ſolitary,———and ſeemed to recal to the thought thoſe diſtant ages, when every foreſt was a Druid's temple, and bards made ſongs under each hoary oak. —But the deep ſolemnity of the ſcene

was

was more than ſufficient to excuſe their enthuſiaſm;—ſuch a ſcene muſt inſpire the ſame reflections in every boſom.——On one ſide there ſeēmed to be an appearance of a once beautiful grove,—the trees—ſilvered by time—hung their white heads aloof—or wreathed in cloſe embraces their pious arms.——They ſtood ſtill a while——contemplating and ſurveying the ſcene around them. The ſtill, alone, untrod path—with moſs oe'rgrown, a while held fancy's wing;—there remained indeed ſome ſmall veſtiges of art, but the rude hand of time had robbed it of its beauties;——they thought——they would have ſaid,—how many happy mortals may have here formerly trod the verdure of this place,——which now ſeems ſo dreary and deſolate,—they looked

looked at one another,—their thoughts were mutual,———and words were unneceſſary.

This ruminating, contemplative humour had for a while chained down the ſenſe of ſight,—when a caſtle at ſome diſtance caught the eye. It was ſituated at ſome depth, almoſt in the inmoſt receſſes of the grove,—and ſeemed as if faſt mouldering to decay. The remaining greatneſs fills us with the deepeſt ideas of its ſublimity and once ſplendid appearance;—but the ſilent ſhades were now laid in duſt, and fancy only could revive the joys it might have known—inmates of each tree and ſtone around—and paint what pleaſure muſt once have

have been received, where there now ſeemed to be nothing but ſilent walls. —Muſic had tun'd its ſtrings to ſympathy——now youth and beauty told their harmleſs tale—and mirth's gay voice had oft bid echo ſpeak—it might—thought formed it—and the idea brought a tear,—it fell—and was loſt among the dew on the nettles.

A gate which hung looſe upon its hinges,—and a ſolitary tree which was ſuſpended over it, by its waving branches ſeemed to invite them to enter. They obeyed the ſilent admonition.—Around—claſping the oak, —the ivy proudly raiſed its feeble head.—Near this was a pond, which

once

once might have reflected the ſun's dazzling rays, or remitted the leſs violent but pleaſing ſplendor of the moon,—— and thereby increaſed its luſtre.—But this was more than half covered with ſedge,—and the remaining half was choaked with weeds.—Though it ſeems to have been once embanked with flowers,—now nettles were every where ſpread around, and uſeleſs weeds towered over the fragrant roſe.

They had not long ſurveyed this penſive and gloomy ſcene, ere a deep groan was heard to iſſue from the dwelling.——Fanny caught her brother by the arm, as if ſurprized at hearing a ſound which ſeemed to be that

of

of an human creature, and thus exclaimed, Oh! my God, where are we?—She ceaſed, after uttering this ſhort ejaculation, and all was ſilent. Upon a nearer approach to the houſe, they heard a voice feebly addreſſing itſelf to ſome other perſon,——" and can " you,—will you then forgive me?—" Oh! you are too good,—and my " mother's angel ſoul breathes from " your lips."——It was a woman's voice, and was ſufficient to excite all their feelings.———Fanny and her brother advancing together—beheld—proſtrate on the floor—a form—to attempt to deſcribe it were in vain;——ſhe would have ſoothed a ſavage of the deſert to be her protector, yet man—but ſuffice it to ſay, that even thus torn as ſhe was with grief and

anguiſh

anguiſh, ſhe appeared lovely, the dark cloud which ſorrow had thrownover her could not conceal her beauty, and ſhe appeared ſtill ſuperior to the common race of women. At her ſide, ſupporting her feeble frame, and endeavouring to conſole her, appeared an old man, whoſe face was deeply furrowed by age and grief, was bathed in tears.—Without regarding them, who during this ſcene, had entered the ſolitary manſion, he replied,—

" Forgive thee! Oh,—may that
" God who gave thee life to bleſs
" me, withdraw his mercy from me,
" if I forgive thee not;——yet live
" my ſoul, and we may yet be
" happy—Here—here thy life firſt
" dawned,——and here,—Oh! lift
" thy cloſing orbs, thy father calls!—

" Oh

" Oh! ope them yet, and bleſs his " breaking heart——my child!——my " child!—" She again faintly opened her eyes,——ſhe would have ſpoke, but 'twas gone,—ſhe cloſed them, and expired.

And now, my Louiſa, you will ſuffer me to leave them for a time, and give you as well as myſelf that repoſe and reſt, which will be neceſſary for the proſecution of the ſtory.

I am, my dear friend,

Your's as ever,

MARIA BELLMOUR.

END of VOL. I.